THE ANTICHRIST

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INTRODUCTION BY
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INTRODUCTION

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There have been many great attacks upon Christianity, strong and effective in their different ways, and one hesitates to distinguish any one of them by the superlative "greatest": but if I were to use this superlative—especially with respect to sheer blasting force of inspired denunciation—I should apply it to *The Antichrist* of Friedrich Nietzsche. In this great essay—in this great pamphlet—in this great battlecry, Nietzsche is uncompromisingly the fighter. He delivers smashing blows, stinging slaps, piercing thrusts, prodigious kicks, world-resounding hoots and cries of cultured scorn. One is not only impressed intellectually, but one is thrilled and moved to the depths by the splendid, sweeping fervor of this attack. Nietzsche, who is indeed a very Hercules of intellectual combat, communicates to the reader the very spirit of his own Herculean antagonism, reinforced by a profound, four-square conviction of the just necessity of the cause. Like Nietzsche, one is sure that one is standing on the highest ground of culture and humanity, that one is fighting in the strongest position intellectually, and that one is assailing not simply an idea, not simply a religion, not simply an unattractive or untrue way of looking at life, but (inclusive of all these aspects) a serious enemy of civilization.

One is aware that it is not merely a theory, viewed in cool and remote detachment, which engages Nietzsche's combative ardor. It is not an argument in the abstract about supernaturalism. It is not an argument of pure reason about dogmas which do not impinge upon life. It is because Christianity is deadly-hostile to all true and fine human values that Nietzsche sends forth his trumpet blast against it—against its ideas and sentiments—against its history and ethics —against all its works and influences. Christianity—Nietzsche repeats the charge again and again and it is the central theme of his magnificent super-pamphlet—is at heart and utterly the foe of civilization.

It is a joy to read such invigorating, such frankly destructive criticism: criticism, moreover, which is destructive of a *destroying* influence. It takes no great thought, after all, to understand that in this great attack Nietzsche is himself the constructive mind arguing for civilization against an institution and an ideal that degrades and would defeat life. Fundamentally, in his philosophic attitude, Nietzsche hates Christianity because it says "No" to life; and the whole of Nietzsche's conviction is that we should say "Yes" to life. One need not agree uncritically with every idea and every line of this

sublime, forceful thinker—indeed, a valuable lesson which he enforces is that of courage and independence in thinking—to realize that the sum of his thought, of his culture, and of his powerful pronunciamento in the present instance is civilized and constructive. He loved "noble values" and his mind comprehended the loftiest interests and aims of life. He was infinitely superior to Christianity (and of course no individual Christian could intellectually or culturally compare with him) in his allegiance to the spirit of truth, of freedom, and of progress.

It was his belief in the worthiness and the fair possibilities of life that engendered hatred of Christianity in the mind of Nietzsche. (For he *hated* Christianity, with the hatred of high-minded conviction, and the reasons for his hatred justify what was in truth a noble emotion of affirmation in behalf of all that is best in life, at once a noble hatred and a noble scorn and superiority. He had indeed a profound contempt for Christianity; but it was not contempt alone that dictated those devastating phrases, those thundering words, those scorching images and comparisons. He was inspired by an active hatred, and naturally so, inasmuch as he had to deal with an active force, a force too that was visibly and insolently more powerful in his day than it is in our day: although it is clear enough that the tremendous blows of Nietzsche are still useful, are still needed, against this historic and, in our day, still blustering and scheming and thwarting enemy of the civilized among mankind.

Nietzsche hated Christianity, then, because he was very close to it—it confronted him directly as an enemy—and, as he himself confesses, he had personally felt its acrid, cramping influence. And the justification of his hatred, aside from the personal feeling that any intelligent man would have in the presence of anything so ignoble, was that the Christian religion was poisonous to philosophy, poisonous to ethics, poisonous to all culture. In a word, a genuine and free and strong culture could not be developed save as Christianity should be destroyed to make way for it.

Science? Religion was, as its very nature necessitated, the sworn foe of science: for science came with the instruments and point of view and mighty factual structure of knowledge which must shatter the shams of religion. Literature? The really great in literature was feared and denounced by the priests of this religion of narrow-mindedness, this religion, too, which essentially was inspired by a hatred of the hearty, fine realities of life: a free literature is inevitably pagan, curious, joyous, and blasphemous: literary culture must be the very opposite of Christian "culture."

And indeed Nietzsche says that the science and art of reading, the knowing of words and their meaning and their true use in the expression of ideas, is the most effective means of showing up the false pretensions of religion. The very terms upon which religion depends—its words such as God, Devil, spirit, soul, immortality, sin, salvation, and the like—reveal its essential character of bunk. (Bunk, by the way, is a word that Nietzsche would have delighted to use;

short and vigorous words, more truthful than polite, abound in *The Antichrist*: he could be blunt, as he could be sharp and subtle, according to the impression which it was important to convey.) Religion uses throughout an unreal language, a set of words that do not correspond to any images or purposes of reality: and it is a good test of intelligence whether one detects the nature of this illusory word pattern, which is of no use whatever save to deceive the victims of pristly craft and ambition, to deceive these victims about the character of life.

There are tremendous implications in the simple remark of Nietzsche that the ancient Romans had developed to the stage of civilization where they *knew how to read.* Words, in their minds, created pictures that were realistic: they were skeptical and did not read incuriously and credulously: they brought an attitude of familiar thoughtfulness to their reading: they had a culture which was carefully and clearly expressed. Of course, the perspicacious reader understands that this knowing how to read did not with the pagans, and does not with civilized persons today, apply solely to books: it is in the broadest sense *knowing how to read life*, how to observe things as they are, how to interpret rationally the real forces of nature and the relations, the impulses, and the aspirations of man. All men of ripe and reflective culture appreciate this importance of knowing how to read, which most men confuse with the simple training of literacy.

There is nothing more common than the habit of reading without understanding. And when a man does not, in the first place, have a clear realistic attitude toward life, how can he possibly find an intelligent, true, living picture of things in what he reads? He misunderstands the simplest words; phrases elude him; the thought which animates the page is beyond his detection; the very allusions, the very images and illustrations, the very basic implications of thought which are necessarily found in intelligent writing are foreign and meaningless to the man who, being literate and able to spell out words, nevertheless does not know how to read.

But the Romans, says Nietzsche, had learned how to read. They had evolved a wonderful organization of powerful, realistic, cultured life. And Christianity was an evil, corrupting agent in the downfall of this splendid ancient civilization. Is it any wonder that Nietzsche —in the degree that he admired that ancient civilization and truly loved the very spirit, the very words, the very outlook of civilization —hated Christianity! Who that appreciates the pagan civilization, which had achieved so much and promised in its sound development so much more, could—facing the record of Christian "civilization" for centuries after the downfall of pagan Rome—intelligibly be a Christian?

We of today, who have reached the stage of scientific, complete rationalism, say that Nietzsche was right in every syllable of his indictment of Christianity. He is supported by the facts of history, by the facts of science, by the facts and the implications and the

essential, underlying spirit of all culture. Civilization and culture have had to gain their triumphs in opposition to the degrading, confusing, altogether evil influence of Christianity; and as culture and civilization have claimed the allegiance of men, Christianity has receded in their regard and certainly, as a theory of life or as a way of life, it is no longer believed by intelligent people. (Sadly must this statement be accompanied by the confession that there are still many people who are not intelligent, although the wisdom of the ages and especially the scientific learning of the past few centuries is at their command if they but learn, as the pagans had learned, *how to read.*)

Neither Christianity as an organized religion, with its churchly dogmas and its claim to control and guide life according to a "spiritual" theory of life which is discredited by the very fundamentals of modern knowledge, nor Christianity in the very academic sense of the supposed personality and "message" of Jesus is reconcilable with a realistic scheme of life. Dogmatically, Christianity has asserted what is false; it has arrogated to itself, without the slightest basis of real knowledge, the position of explaining life (and, more important in the Christian view, the "beyond life" to which it would have life be miserably, falsely subservient): it has been at once the most vicious engine of tyrannical worldly power and the most corrupting source of anti-worldly, anti-human "spiritual" bunk. There has been no consistency in Christianity: but in both of its main characteristics it has been antagonistic to the best interests of mankind.

Jesus, of course, is but a name and a myth employed spectacularly, though not logically, in the service of this inconsistent religion. One understands what Nietzsche means when he says that the last Christian died on the cross—the only Christian: for obviously the complete ascetic ideal of Jesus, the strange and morbid psychology which (in the most coherent picture we can make of this little known or one may say unknown figure) dominated him could not long and actively serve as the official teaching of a religion. Even granting that some men have attempted to follow in the way of Jesus and that they have considerably succeeded in this attempt (a kind of success which must in its very nature be a failure or a denial of life), it is apparent that a really Jesus-inspired Christianity would be impossible.

But Paul had the asceticism of Jesus, only in Paul it was less a renunciation of life than a hatred of life. And Christianity, while its politics have certainly been far removed from the mild, renunciatory, "kingdom-of-heaven-within" gospel ascribed to Jesus, nevertheless has been poisoned with the pretenses of "spirituality" and with the futile, puritanical "nay-saying" of the Jesus legend. It must be said in all candor that the chief blame for mankind's self-torturing and fear and shame with regard to sex, for example, rests upon the despicably distorting influence of Christianity. It seems clear enough that without the confusions and the cruel denials of what is natural and sane which have been maintained by the Christian doctrines of purity and "spirituality" and godliness—or, in short, by the Christian

emphasis upon a "life to come" which discouraged a true consideration of the hopes and needs and problems of this life—mankind would today have a more intelligent, happy attitude toward sex, as they would be far more sensibly adjusted to all the realities of life.

The dual roles, as it were, that Christianity has played in history —its politics of power and its philosophy of "spiritual" negation of life (negation of reality and culture)—explain what at first glance may appear a contradiction in Nietzsche's criticism. He speaks of the Christian attitude of envy and suspicion and hatred toward superior, powerful, great men and ideas and events: Christianity, he says, is the religion of weakness in contrast with the gospel of greatness and power which Nietzsche would wish mankind to honor. But the contradiction is only apparent: power such as that wielded by barbaric Popes and Kings, power without culture or vision, power utterly indifferent to the future of humanity on this earth—that was not the sort of power that Nietzsche, in a spirit of poetry and prophecy that looked a long way ahead, conceived as admirable or desirable.

The power of Christianity was a power meanly obtained and meanly used; it was, moreover, a power which was exercised to beat down and cruelly discourage the appearance of all the fine values which Nietzsche loved; Nietzsche at times speaks recklessly of the will-to-power as something worthy in itself, yet it is after all the sum of his philosophy that power should be something of large human vision and thoughtfulness and culture. The mere power of exploitation and tyranny and conquest was, after all, opposed to the values which Nietzsche envisaged in his poetic, prophetic way as brilliantly justifying his rather fanciful (yet, if one brings it down to a realistic scale, inspiring) ideal of "the Superman."

And thus Christianity, whether in its manifestations of bigoted power, fighting all the aims of culture and civilization, or in its influence of a life-denying, truth-denying, nature-and-man-hating "spiritual" philosophy is truthfully indicted by Nietzsche. It is true, as he asserts, that Christianity has trampled upon all that is good and natural and sane in life. It is true that noble and superior things, which Nietzsche elevates in his regard, have been ever suspected and persecuted by Christianity: and that Christian power has been employed principally to keep humanity, to keep the culture and the progress of human society, from becoming powerful. It is true that Christianity, as a philosophy of life or as a religion or as an engine of power, has been foolish and mean and base. It is true that with the burden of Christianity fully upon them mankind could never have progressed to the point from which Nietzsche surveyed the world, nor beyond that to the scientific modernism which we, more fortunately placed in time, see about us. Consistently, and as by the force of a natural law of progress, the upbuilding of culture and civilization has necessitated a tearing down of Christianity. As Nietzsche says with his rude, right realism, Christianity (like other religions) has in its practical character been a scheme of priestly power, duping and doping the masses of mankind with a "spiritual" philosophy of

submission, futility, anti-humanness: a philosophy from which proceeds also a poor, mean hatred of what is good and what is noble and what is earthfully forward-looking in life.

One may add, too, that the so-called "gentler virtues"—pity, meekness, non-resistance and the like—which Nietzsche wrongly identified as Christian in practice have, in Christian preaching, appeared as poor, mean "virtues": at the best, when sincerely preached as Christianity, they have been futile in their remoteness from life and have, as Nietzsche truly says, been the reflection of weak natures: at the worst, it must be said that Christianity has been pitiless, arrogant, and violent (with a ghastly, barbaric will-to-power indeed!) in enforcing itself upon mankind. There has been much unreal, sickly sentimentalism in Christian preaching though not in Christian practice: but Christianity has been far removed from even the understanding of true humanitarianism—the kind of humanitarianism which Nietzsche, after all, featured in the noble sum and symmetry of his thought.

The Antichrist

Friedrich Nietzsche

Let us face one another. We are Hyperboreans. We know well enough that we dwell apart—"Thou wilt find the way to the Hyperboreans," said Pindar, "neither by water nor by land." This much about us at least was known to him. Further than the north, beyond the ice, beyond death, is our abode and our happiness. We have explored the happy dwelling-place; we know the way there. After thousands of years in the labyrinth we found the way out—and has anybody else found it? Has modern man?—"I do not know where I am," he moans. "I am utterly without knowledge of whence I came or whither I am going"—and this modernity made us feel sick: with its stagnant contentedness, its cowardly compromising, and all the virtuous dirtiness of its modern yes-and-no. The kind of toleration and broad-mindedness that "forgives" all when it "understands" all, is a sirocco to us. Far better to live amidst the ice-floes than in modern virtues and other south-winds! . . . It was not our courage that failed: we spared neither ourselves nor others but we knew not where our courage was most needed. We became sombre and men called us fatalists; but our fatalism was the accumulation, and the tautening, and the storing of energy. We were eager for thunderings and action; we shunned the weakling's joy—resignation . . . A storm was in our air; the sky above us grew dark; at that time we had not found our way. Formula of our happiness: a yes, a no, a straight line, an objective . . .

II

What is good—everything that increases the feeling of power, the will to power, and power itself, in men. What is evil?—everything based in weakness. What is joy?—the emotion of power increasing, of a resistance overcome. Not contentedness, but more power! Not peace at any price, but war! Not "goodness," but more ability! ("Goodness" in the Renaissance-idiom is "virtue," free of moral taint.) The weak and the misbegotten shall sink to the ground: this is our humanitarian slogan: and they should be helped to sink.

What is the most harmful vice?—pity shown to the misbegotten and the feeble—Christianity.

III

The problem I state here is not what will replace man in the evolution of species (for man is an end in himself); but what type of man shall be evolved, shall be willed, as having the highest value, as being the most worthy to live and the best guarantor of the future? Already this higher type of man has appeared occasionally; but always by a stroke of luck, exceptionally, never as the result of an act

of will. On the contrary, far from being desired, he has always been greatly feared; he has inspired a supreme terror—and out of that terror of the higher type of man there arose the desire to evolve or to breed or to achieve the opposite type: the tame beast, the mob-animal, the sick brute-man—the Christ-type . . .

IV

Mankind does not show any evolution toward a better or a stronger or a higher level, as these terms are understood today. "Progress" is merely a modern idea. Hence of course a false idea. The European of today, in his sense of values, falls far below the European of the Renaissance: evolution by no means implies a raising of standards, a step upwards, a strengthening of the species. It does succeed, however, at times, in producing a higher type, in varying civilizations and in isolated cases: and compared to the average man, such types are undoubtedly a kind of beyond-man. The possibility of luck in successfully producing this type has always been present, and perhaps will always be present; and even whole races, tribes and peoples may exemplify such a fortuitously happy achievement.

V

There is no need to deck out Christianity in fine trappings: for it has waged war to the death against this higher type of man; it has laid a ban upon all the basic instincts of this type, it has distilled evil and the voice of evil out of those very instincts, rebuking the strong man as a wrong-doer. Christianity has taken sides with all the feeble, the base, and the misbegotten; it has found its ideal in opposing the instincts which maintain life in a healthy condition: it has even corrupted the reasoning power of strong intelligences by making out that the highest intellectual values are sinful, misleading, and a temptation. As a superb example of this, consider the disruption of Pascal, who believed his reasoning ability was perverted by original sin; whereas it was merely worm-eaten by Christianity!

VI

It is a distressing, a painful spectacle that appears before me: I have drawn back the curtain which conceals the putrescence of mankind. This word, as I use it, at least cannot be suspected of implying any moral stigma. It is, I must again insist, free of moral taint: so much so that I detect the putrescence in question precisely where there has hitherto been most aspiration toward "goodness" and "Godliness." I define putrescence, as may be supposed, in the sense of decadence. My contention is simply that all the values now regarded as most desirable are nothing but decadence-values.

I define an animal, a species, or an individual as decadent when it loses its instincts; when it adopts and when it even prefers what is injurious to itself. A history of the "better feelings," of "Humanmanity's ideals"—and I may have to write this—would almost explain why mankind is so putrescent. In my view life is essentially an instinct towards development, towards survival, towards the conserva-

tion of energies, towards power: degeneration occurs when the will to power fails. My contention is, that all the values now regarded as most desirable are lacking in this will; and that values of degeneration and nihilism hold sway under the holiest of names.

VII

Christianity is known as the religion of pity—and pity stands in opposition to the tonic emotions which stimulate the feeling of being alive: it is a depressant. A man loses power when he pities. Pity intensifies the drain upon strength which suffering already adds to life. Pain itself becomes infectious through pity; in certain cases it may lead to a total sacrifice of life and living energy absurdly out of proportion to the occasion (such as at the death of the Nazarene). That is the first view of it; but there is another still more important. Measuring pity by the value of the reactions it sets up, its destructive effect upon life becomes much more evident. Pity interferes profoundly with the law of development which is the law of selection. It preserves what is ripe for decay, it lends its aid to the disinherited and to those condemned by life. By keeping life in all kinds of misbegotten wretches, it even makes life itself seem a questionable, gloomy affair. Pity has been impertinently described as a virtue (in any decent moral code it is a sign of weakness): going still further, it has even been described as the supreme virtue, the root and fountain-head of all the virtues—but let us not forget that this was from the standpoint of a philosophy of nihilism, which inscribed on its shield the rejection of life. Schopenhauer was within his rights on this point: that by means of pity life is rejected and made more worth rejecting. Pity is the praxis of nihilism. I repeat, this depressing and contagious impulse frustrates the instincts which tend to exalt life and enhance its value. By perpetuating suffering and by multiplying suffering it is the supreme instigator of increasing decadence. Pity leads to nothing! It is a guide to annihilation, though annihilation is not the usual term. Usually they say "the beyond," or "God," or "the true way of life," or nirvana, or salvation, or blessedness . . . Oh, this simple-rhetorical language of the kingdom of religion and morals! It is a good deal less innocent when one realizes that the impulse hiding behind a mantle of wordy sublimity is none other than the impulse of hostility to life. Schopenhauer was hostile to life: therefore he made pity into a virtue . . . Aristotle, as is well known, regarded pity as a sickly and dangerous condition which needed clearing out of the system every now and then by means of a purgative: and he regarded tragedy as a purgative. If we are to preserve the instinct to live we must certainly find some method of lancing the pus-accumulation of pity which is chronic in Schopenhauer (and unfortunately, in the whole literary decadence from St. Petersburg to Paris, from Tolstoi to Wagner): we must puncture the boil till it bursts . . . Nothing is more pathological in our pathological modernity than this disease of Christian pity. To be doctors here, to be inexorable, to wield the knife here—that is our task and

our humanitarian duty; that's what makes us philosophers, we hyperboreans!

VIII

It is necessary to state exactly whom we regard as our opponents: the theologians, and all who have theological blood in their veins—our whole philosophy, this. A man needs to have had his nose close to the malady, or better still, to have been infected with it, almost to have succumbed to it, before he can realize that it is no joke (what seems funny to me is the apathy of our friends the scientists and physiologists: they have no passion in these matters, they have not had the complaint). The infection extends further than people think: I find theological proudflesh extending wherever men profess and call themselves "idealists"—wherever, thanks to inspiration from on high, a man claims the right to rise above actuality and look upon it with suspicion . . . The idealist, like the priest, has all kinds of big ideas in his hand (and elsewhere!) with which he very benevolently bludgeons "the understanding," "sense-perceptions," "a sense of honor," "a sense of decency," "empirical knowledge"—he regards such things as beneath him, as pernicious and seductive forces, above which the "soul" soars ever so purely: as though humility, Christianity, poverty—in one word, holiness—had not already wrought more harm to life than every kind of forbidden horror and wickedness. The pure spirit is a pure lie . . . So long as the priest, that professional negator, slanderer and poisoner of life, is regarded as a superior type of human being, there cannot be any answer to the question: what is truth? Truth has been turned upside down already if the firm advocates of annihilation and negation are accepted as apostles of light . . .

IX

Against this theological instinct I declare war: I find its spoor everywhere. Whoever has theological blood in his veins is naturally shifty and dishonorable in all things. The sickly condition ensuing is called faith: which means wilfully turning the eyes away from self to avoid the painful sight of an incurable mendacity. Thus vision is warped, and in the distorted prospect a virtue, a morality and a holiness is constructed: good conscience is derived from bad sight: and it is claimed that no other kind of vision has value any more, since this one has been made sacrosanct with the names of "God," "salvation," and "eternity." I dig up the traces of this theological instinct in all kinds of places. It is the most widely-occurring and also the most subtly-concealed form of subterranean deceit to be found on the earth. Whatever a theologian regards as true must of necessity be false—this almost provides a criterion of truth, for it is the theological deep-seated instinct of self-protection which prevents actuality from ever being held in esteem, which even prevents it from being defined. Wherever the theological influence reigns value-judgments are inverted, and the concepts "true" and "false" change places automatically: everything most harmful to life is called "true," and whatever exalts life, intensifies it, glories in it, and makes it

triumphant, is called "false" . . . Whence it follows that, whenever the theologians, working upon the "consciences" of princes (or of peoples), stretch out their hands for power, there is never any doubt what fundamental result would follow: the will to end life would begin to operate, the nihilistic will to power . . .

X

Germans will immediately understand me when I say that theological blood is the ruin of philosophy, for the Protestant pastor is the grandfather of German philosophy; and Protestantism is its original sin (a definition of Protestantism:—partial paralysis of Christianity, total paralysis of reason). A mere mention of the words "Tubigen school" is enough to explain that German philosophy is at heart only a form of theology. The Swabians are the best liars in Germany; for they lie without knowing it . . . Why all the rejoicing with which Kant's appearance was greeted by the whole learned world of Germany—of which three-fourths consists of parsons' and schoolmasters' sons? Why the German opinion, which still has an echo, that with Kant there came a change for the better? It was the theological instinct of German scholars which made them realize what had again become possible—a backstairs to the old ideal had been constructed. By means of a cunning semblance of scepticism the old concepts of the "true world" and of morality as the essence of being were shown to be at least not refutable, even if not demonstrable . . . Reason and the prerogative of reason does not govern this territory! Reality was sublimated into "experience," and an utterly false world (of "being") was sanctified as reality . . . The success of Kant was purely a theological success, nothing more. Like Leibnitz and Luther, Kant was one more check upon the German sense of righteousness, which was beginning to wobble . . .

XI

Now to deal with Kant as a moralist. A virtue must be our own invention, our own personal defense and need; otherwise it is harmful, for a foreign body not essential to our organism is always noxious to it. A virtue arising purely from respect for the concept "virtue," as Kant would have it, is noxious . . . "Virtue," "duty," "pure goodness," goodness with the character of impersonality or universal validity—these are not concepts but phantasms; they express the decline and the final enervation of life, the Chinese religion of Konigsberg. Exactly the opposite principle is required if life is to expand and develop: that each man should find his own virtue, his own categorical imperative. A race is sinking downwards when it confounds it own special duty with the concept of duty-in-general. Nothing is more intrinsically ruinous than "impersonal" duties, and in fact all offerings before the Moloch of abstraction . . . To think that Kant's categorical imperative has not yet been recognized as a noxious irritant in living bodies! . . . Only the theological instinct gave it a welcome . . . Any action arising in the instinct to live has its justification in the satisfaction or pleasure it brings: in joy it is

established as a right action. But that nihilist with the guts of a Christian dogmatist actually considered pleasure to be an objection! What destroys a man quicker than to work and think and feel without inner necessity—as a mere automaton of "duty"? This is veritably the recipe for decadence, and, yes, for idiocy. Kant fell into imbecility. And this was in Goethe's life-time! A spinner of fate's cobwebs was taken to be the supreme German philosopher—he still is! I refrain from saying what I think about the Germans after that . . . Did Kant not see in the French revolution a transition from the inorganic to the organic form of society? Did he not ask himself whether there was any event which might possibly be explained on other grounds than as a moral impulse of mankind? So that he could demonstrate finally man's "tendency toward goodness"? Kant would reply, "But that is revolution!"—the instinct to be wrong everywhere and in everything, the instinct to deny nature, German decadence as a philosophy—there you have Kant in a nutshell!

XII

Apart from a few skeptics, the decent types in the history of philosophy, the rest are strangers to the first principles of intellectual honesty. They act just like women, these great gushing prodigies —they mistake "beautiful feelings" for arguments, they look upon the "heaving bosom" as a bellows of divinity, and conviction as the test of truth. In the end, Kant, with typical German ingeniousness, even tried to give a scientific dress to this particular kind of corruption and lack of intellectual scruple. With the aid of his concept of "practical reason," he produced a special kind of reason, for use on occasions when reason cannot function: namely, when the sublime command, "Thou shalt," resounds. And when it is recalled that the philosopher is merely a development from the priest, such a self-deception, such a heritage from priestliness, is not so amazing. When a man has a holy task before him, for example to uplift, save or deliver his fellows; when he carries divinity in his bosom and is the mouthpiece of commands from on high, naturally with such a mission he is above the mere imperatives of ordinary reason. He feels that he is a man apart, sanctified by his task, a celestial being almost! What does a priest care for science? He is superior to it! And hitherto it is the priest who has held sway! It is the priest who has defined the concepts "true" and "not true"!

XIII

There is one fact we should not under-estimate: we ourselves—we free spirits—are already a "reversal of all values," a living declaration of war against all the old concepts of "true" and "untrue," and a triumph over them. The most valuable intuitions are those which come late; and the most valuable of all is that of method. All the methods, all the elementary procedure of our modern scientific knowledge, were held in contempt for centuries: anybody who dabbled in them was excluded from "respectable" company, was looked upon as an "enemy of God," as a mocker of truth and as

"possessed by the devil." A man with a scientific character was classed with Chandala outcasts . . . We have had the whole pathetic opinion of mankind against us—their notion of what should be true and what should take the place of truth was thrust upon us; and their every "thou shalt" was brought into action against us . . . Our motives and our procedure, and our calm, cautious, untrustful way of looking at things, were all vilified and condemned. Perhaps it may be urged with some justification that it was an esthetic impulse which kept men in blindness so long. They wanted truth to seem picturesque. From the learned they demanded an appeal to their senses. It was our moderation which repelled men so long . . . But oh, how well the turkey-cocks of God understood all this!

XIV

We have restated our knowledge. In advancing facts we have become more moderate. No longer do we derive man from the "spirit" or from "God." We have placed him back amongst the beasts. We classify him as the strongest of the animals, because he is the craftiest (hence his spirituality!) But even here we are careful to avoid a delusion which might seem attractive, namely that man is the driving purpose behind evolution in the animal kingdom. He is anything but the crown of creation. Every living creature is comparatively as well developed—even this statement needs a reservation, for man is actually the most ill-adapted of animals, the sickliest, the one which has strayed farthest from its instincts: though withal he is easily the most interesting! Concerning animals, Descartes was the first to postulate, with admirable insight, the mechanism of beasts; and now all our pyysiology is directed toward proving his theory. Moreover, we do not put man in a class by himself, as Descartes did. We regard him also as mechanistic, nowadays. Once upon a time he was endowed with a "free will," the gift of powers from above: nowadays we call in question even the existence of the will itself, in the sense that there is no longer any need to postulate such a faculty. The word "will" in its old use has come to mean merely the effect of an individual reaction which must necessarily follow upon a series of partly unrelated and partly harmonized stimuli—the "will" is no longer a cause, no longer a "motive" . . . Formerly it was held that the man's mind, his "spirit," was a proof of his divine origin. To achieve perfection he was recommended to benumb his senses like the tortoise, to have no truck with earthly things, or to cast off his mortal frame, so that the best part of him, his "pure spirit," would remain . . . We have thought of a better explanation than this: we regard soulfulness, or the "spirit," as a mark of relative imperfection in an organism, as a piece of fumbling guesswork, as a laborious error, as an unnecessary using-up of nervous energy. We deny that anything can be done perfectly by taking thought. The "pure spirit" is a pure humbug. Take away the nervous system and the senses, take away the "mortal frame"—and if anything remains over, it is a miscalculation: that is all!

XV

Neither as an ethical code nor as a religion has Christianity any point of contact with things as they actually are. It is concerned with purely fantastic causes ("God," "the soul," "the self," "the spirit," "freewill"—even "unfree" will); and it is concerned with purely fantastic effects ("sin," "salvation," "grace," "punishment," "forgiveness of sin"). It communes with fantastic creatures ("God," "ghosts," and "souls"); it professes a fantastic science (anthropocentric, with no conception of natural causes); a fantastic psychology (a pure self-deception, which misinterprets feelings, pleasant and unpleasant of, for example, the nervus sympatheticus, in terms of religious and moral symbolism—such as "repentance," "conscience," "possession by the devil," "the voice of God," "the last judgment," and "everlasting life")—this world of pure fantasy is to be differentiated, to its disadvantage, from the world of dreams; for the dream-world at least reflects actuality, whereas the other falsifies, slanders, and denies actuality. Once the concept "nature" is regarded as opposed to the contrary concept "God," the word "natural" has necessarily to take on a meaning of "abominable." The whole Christian fantasy-world is based in an aversion from what is natural (from actuality!) —it is a vote of no-confidence in life as it actually exists . . . Ah, but this explains everything . . . Who would have a reason for escaping from actuality?—the man who suffers from it! And if he suffers from actuality a man must be a misfit in the world as it actually is. A predominance of pain over joy is the explanation of this religion and ethic of escape: just as in the same way a predominance of pain over joy is the formula of decadence . . .

XVI

We are led to a similar conclusion by examining the Christian concept of God. Any nation that believes in itself will hold fast to its own God. In him it honors its own virtues and the qualities which enable it to develop. Such a people projects its own desire, its feeling or power, into a being that consequently has some claim to be honored. To this God the rich will give of their wealth: a dignified nation needs a God, for sacrifices . . . Thus viewed, religion is a kind of gratitude. A man owes gratitude to himself; therefore he requires a God. Such a God must be able to confer benefits, and also to inflict injuries, must be both a friend and a foe. He is marvelous in both good and evil—but the unnatural castration of a God, making him merely good, passes all comprehension. An evil God is quite as necessary as a good God. Surely existence does not derive merely from divine toleration and humanitarianism; what is the use of a God who knows nothing of passion, revenge, envy, scorn, cunning and violence?—who had perhaps never known the rapturous ardors of victory and of destruction? Such a God would not be comprehensible; why should he be needed? Admittedly, when a people is on the downward path, when they feel that their belief in the future, their hope of freedom, is disappearing; when capitulation

seems necessary and submission is advisable in the interests of self-protection; then they have to modify their God! He then becomes a timid and obsequious crawler. He counsels "peace-at-any-price," "hate-no-more," "compromise," and even "love" towards friend and foe alike. He is always moralizing. He creeps into the core of every private virtue. He becomes a God for everybody, he retires from active service, he goes abroad for a trip and becomes a cosmopolitan . . . Formerly he stood for a nation, for all that was ascendant and powerful in the heart of a people: but now he is merely the good God above. For there is only one alternative for Gods: they are either the will to power, in which case they are national-Gods; or they are impotent, and then they must be good . . .

XVII

When the will to power breaks down at some point, the result is invariably a physiological enfeebling, a state of decadence; and this decadence deified (divinity shorn of all manly virtues and passions), naturally takes the form of a God of physical debilitation, a God of the feeble . . . But they don't call themselves the feeble, they call themselves "the good" . . . A wink is as good as a nod to indicate just at what point in history the dualistic fiction of a good and an evil God first became possible. It is the instinct of a people cowed into subjection which compels them to degrade their God into "pure goodness"; and the same instinct prompts them to depreciate the qualities of strength in their conquerors' God. (The good God and the Devil as well; both are abortions conceived by decadence.) Christian theologians claim that the evolution of the idea of God from the "God of Israel," a tribal God, to the Christian God, a concept of universal goodness, is an advance. Why do we make such a concession to simple-mindedness as to grant them this? Yet Renan does—as if Renan had any right to be simple-minded! The contrary is obvious. When all that is strong, and brave, and masterful, and haughty is eliminated from the idea of God; and step by step he has become a staff for the weary, a straw for the drowning; when he has become a poor-box God, a sinner's God, and a God of Gods for invalids; when his highest mark of divinity is that he "redeems" and "saves": then what does the change mean? What is implied in such a lowering of Godly status? Admittedly, the "kingdom of God" by these means extends its boundaries. Once upon a time he ruled only his own people, his "chosen" people; but since then he has gone wandering into foreign lands, just like his chosen people, and he has lost his settled place of abode. Finally he came to feel at home anywhere and everywhere, he became the great cosmopolitan and he got "the greatest number" on his side, half the earth in fact. But the God of the great majority, the democrat amongst Gods, did not hereupon become proud like a heathen God: he remained a Jew, a God of back streets, God of dark holes and corners, God of all the world's slums! His earthly kingdom is still in the underworld, still an "Alsatia," still a tenement area, a ghetto still . . . And he himself

has become so pallid and so rickety, and so decadent . . . Even the palest of the pale can now master him; even the Albinos of intellect —our metaphysicians! They spun their webs about him so long that in the end he was hypnotized, he became a spinner himself, God become a metaphysician. Then he began again spinning the world out of his own innards—Spinoza fashion—he became thinner and paler etc., he became "ideal," "the pure spirit," "the absolute," he actually became the "thing-in-itself" . . . Oh, what a collapse of God —he became a "thing-in-itself"!

XVIII

The Christian idea of God—God as a deity of the sick, God as a spinner of cobwebs, God as a Ghost—is one of the most corrupt ideas that has ever been generated on earth: it is probably low-water-mark in the ebbing evolution of the God-type—God degraded into the negation of life instead of being its glorification and eternal affirmation! This God declares war upon life, upon natural existence, and upon the will to live! This God is the formula for slandering "this world," and for lying about the "next"! In this God annihilation is deified and the desire to be annihilated is made holy!

XIX

The fact that the virile races of northern Europe have not rejected the Christian God, does little credit to their religious ability; not to mention their good taste. They should have been able to deal with such a sickly and decrepit offshoot of decadence. But because they did not, a curse lies upon them: they have added sickliness, decrepitude and a self-division to their instincts—and they have not been able to create any more new Gods! Two thousand years have gone by without even one new God! Instead we still have with us—apparently established by right as the ultimate possible achievement of the God-building trade, the "creator spiritus" in man—this pitiable God of Christian monotono-theism! We still have with us a hybrid dilapidated creature, built from no thinking and subject to no changes of thought: and in him every impulse of decadence, cowardice and weariness of soul finds its sanction!

XX

In my attack upon Christianity I must avoid an injustice to a somewhat similar religion—which has an even greater following—Buddhism. Both are nihilistic religions, religions of decadence, but there is an extraordinary difference between them; and it is owing to the work of Indian scholars that a critic of Christianity can make the study in comparison.

Buddhism is a hundred times more realistic than Christianity. It has the ingrained habit of facing problems objectively and coolly, for it has sprung from hundreds of years of deep philosophical reflection: the idea of God it has disposed of long ago. Buddhism is the only really positive religion known to history; even in its epistemology (which is a strict phenomenalism) it avoids speaking of the "struggle against sin," and refers, more realistically, to the "struggle against

pain." In sharp contradistinction to Christianity, it avoids the self-deception of ideas of morality—it stands, as I phrase it, "beyond good and evil." The two philosophical facts upon which it is based and upon which it focuses attention are: firstly, a keen sensibility, which takes the form of a refined intuition of pain; and secondly, an excessive spirituality, an undue preoccupation with problems of thought and logical procedure, which causes the personal instincts to be subordinate to hte "impersonal." (Both of these states of mind will be familiar to certain of my readers, the "objective" ones, who, like myself, know them in experience.) The genesis of these mental states is in physical depression; which Buddha sought to counteract by rules of hygiene. To cure it, he prescribed life in the open air, a life of travel; moderation and care in the choice of foods; a caution against spirituous liquors; and likewise against all passions which create bile and heat the blood; and no worry, either about oneself or for others. He encourages all ideas which bring peace of mind or cheerfulness, and seeks ways of overcoming other kinds of thoughts. He defines goodness, or being good, as the promotion of health. Prayer is eschewed, and so is asceticism; there is no categorical imperative, no discipline of any kind, not even within the walls of a monastery—it is always possible to leave—for such things would intensify the excessive sensibility already mentioned. For the same reason his advice is against any conflict with infidels; nothing is more repellent to his doctrine than feelings of revenge, aversion and resentment ("hatred does not put an end to hatred," is the pathetic refrain of all Buddhism). And to this extent he was right: that these passions are indeed most antagonistic to his main dietetic purpose. The spiritual lassitude that he finds in excessive "objectivity" (that is, an individual's loss of interest, loss of balance, and of "egotism" he combats by making a strong attempt to reestablish intellectual interest in personality. In Buddha's teaching egotism is a duty: the "one thing needful," that is, "how canst thou overcome pain?" regulates and determines the whole spiritual diet. (Here we should recall that the Athenian who also attacked pure "scientificality," Socrates, raised personal egotism into one of the problems of morality).

XXI

The prerequisites for Buddhism are a very mild climate, gentleness and liberality of manners; and no militarism. The movement must also originate amongst the upper classes, or the learned. Cheerfulness, peace of mind, and a curbing of desire will be sought after, and will be attained. Buddhism is not a religion which merely aspires towards perfection: perfection is the normal state of affairs—in the Christian religion it is the instinct of the subjugated and the oppressed which predominate: the lowest classes look to it for salvation. The Christian cure for monotony is the pastime of playing casuistically with sin, self-abasement, and probings of conscience. A feeling of ease in the presence of a person of rank (called "God")

is ecstatically induced by means of prayer; and influence with the all-highest is vindicated by "gifts" and "acts of grace." In this religion also candor is avoided; concealment and the dim religious light are Christian. In this faith the body is despised, and hygiene is shunned as sensual. The church opposes cleanliness (the first Christian act after the Moors were driven out was to close the baths, of which there were two hundred and seventy in Cordova alone). Christian also is a streak of cruelty towards self and others; hatred of unbelievers; the desire to persecute. Gloomy and disturbing ideas predominate; epileptoid states of mind are held in high regard; a diet is favored which engenders morbid symptoms and frays the nerves. Christian also is a hostility towards the rulers of the earth —towards the "seats of the mighty"—and with this goes a kind of furtive emulation of the mighty ("they may own our bodies, but our souls are our own") . . . Christian also is a hatred of the intellect, of pride, of courage, of freedom, of spiritual profligacy . . . And Christian also is a hatred of the senses and of sensuous joy, in fact of all joy . . .

XXII

When the Christian religion left its home amongst the depressed classes in the underworld of antiquity, and went to seek a foothold amongst barbarian peoples, it was confronted not with exhausted men, but with men who were still instinctively savage and torn by emotional dissensions—with strong, but muddled, men. In such people self-resentment and self-torture do not take the Buddhistic form of a sensibility to and endurance of pain, but instead they take the form of a strong desire to inflict pain on others; to relieve inner tension by warlike acts and ideals. Christianity had need of barbaric ideas and barbaric precepts in order to be able to gain a mastery over the barbarians: ideas such as the sacrifice of the only-begotten son; blood-drinking at supper; sneers at intellect and culture; physical and mental torture; the great pomp of the cult. Buddhism is a religion for urbane men—for a good, kind, highly spiritual people— (Europe is not ripe for it yet, by a long way): its appeal is for peace and cheerfulness, for intellectual discipline and a certain physical endurance. But Christianity wants to domesticate wild animals: its method is to make them sick—"break their spirits" is the Christian way of taming, the Christian recipe for "civilization." Buddhism is a religion for the concluding stages of an exhausted civilization: but Christianity operates where civilization has not yet begun, or where it lays the foundations itself.

XXIII

Buddism, I repeat, is a hundred times more dignified and reasoned and objective. It has got beyond justifying suffering and sensitivity to pain in terms of a theory of sin—it merely says, "I suffer" . . . But to the barbarian pain is something which he cannot understand. For the savage to become aware at all that he is in pain he needs some explanation of the reason for pain. (Left to himself his

instinct is to ignore pain or to suffer it in silence.) Here the word "Devil" came in handy: man has a supernatural and awe-inspiring foe—there is no need to be ashamed of suffering at the hands of such an adversary. One or two deep-rooted subtleties of the Orient are ingrained in the Christian religion. For example, it realizes that, no matter whether a thing be true or not, it is important that it should be believed in as true. But truth and the belief that something is true are two utterly different sets of ideas—almost two contradictory sets of ideas—which are reached separately by two quite different approaches. To understand this is almost the same thing in the East as being a sage: the Brahmins understood it, Plato understood it, every student of the esoteric understands it. For example, when a man gets some satisfaction out of being delivered from sin, it is not necessary that he should have been actually a sinner; he need only have had the feeling of being a sinner. But when the necessity of faith is exalted above everything else, it follows that reason, knowledge, and research must be discredited: the road to truth is closed. As for hope, if sufficiently strong it is a greater encouragement to keep on living than actual joy could ever be. Man needs to be sustained in his suffering by a hope which adversity cannot shake, a hope which can never be put to the test of actual fulfilment: a hope in the world to come. (Precisely because hope has the power to make the wretched linger on, the Greeks regarded it as the evil of evils, as the most mischievous of the evil spirits which were left on earth to generate evil.) As for Christian love, God had to become a person for this to be possible; and, to give suppressed instincts a chance, God had to be young. For the ardor of the women a beautiful saint, and for the men a holy virgin were brought into the picture: this was particularly necessary where the Christian religion set out to win a territory previously cultivated by the religious notions of Aphrodisiac or Adonis worship. In addition an insistence upon chastity strengthens the vehemence and the introverted intensity of the religious impulse: it makes the cult warmer, more enthusiastic, more soulful. Love is a frame of mind in which things seem most different from what they really are: in love the power of illusion reaches its highest degree, and so does the art of sweetening and transfiguration. When a man is in love he endures more than at any other time: he will put up with anything. The problem was to find a religion which made some allowance for love: love which conquers the worst life has to offer, love which is blind . . . These are the three Christian virtues of faith, and love, and hope. I call them the three Christian sophistries. Buddhism is far too old, and too sure of itself, to bother about being superficially clever like this.

XXIV

I have briefly outlined the problem of the origin of Christianity. The first step in its solution is to realize that Christianity can only be understood in terms of the soil from which it sprang. It is not the outcome of a revolt against Jewish ways: it is a product of Jewish

ways, one stage further in the awe-inspiring logic of the Jews. In the words of the Savior, "Salvation is of the Jews." The second step in the solution of the problem is to realize that the psychological type of the Galilean persists, but it had to appear utterly degenerated (muddled and overlaid with non-essentials), before it could be used as a symbol of the salvation of mankind.

The Jews are the most remarkable people in human history because, whenever they have been faced with the question, "to be or not to be," they have always decided, with an uncanny insight, to be at any price: even if that price was the radical falsification of human nature, naturalness, reality, and the entire inner world as well as the external world. They have entrenched themselves within all the provisos under which a people can survive intact or has been allowed to survive. Out of their own consciousness they have evolved a set of ideas in opposition to all natural conditions of living—one by one they have taken religion, culture, morality, history, and psychology, and converted them irreparably into a contradiction of their natural meaning. We meet with the same phenomenon elsewhere, but all disjointed, a mere copy—for the Christian church lacks all claim to originality as compared with the "holy race" . . . Because of their capacity for distortion, the Jews are the most fateful people in human history. In the course of their operations they have hoodwinked mankind so much, that even to this day the Christian can feel anti-Semitic without realizing that he himself is the logical consequence of Judaism.

In my *Genealogy of Morals* I give the first psychological explanation of the distinction between a noble morality and a morality of resentment; the latter being merely a negation of the former—and this latter is the Jewish-Christian morality through and through! In order to be able to say no to life on the up-grade, to success, power, and beauty, and self-affirmation on earth, it was necessary for the instinct of resentment, or for the genius of resentment, to discover another world, one from which that affirmation of life could be regarded as evil and reprehensible. Psychologically considered, the Jews are a people very hard to suppress, who when they had to face impossible surroundings, deliberately selected the part of decadence, and made their choice with a profound worldly wisdom in order to preserve themselves intact. I do not mean that the Jews were overcome by decadence, but that they saw in it a method by which they could assert themselves against the world. The Jews are the opposite of decadent: they have simply been obliged to take on the part, so much so that with an incredible degree of histrionic genius, they have managed to place themselves in control of all decadent movements (such as Paul's Christianity) in order to make themselves stronger than the assertive forces of life. The kind of man who seeks power under Judaism or Christianity (that is, the priest) uses decadence as no more than a means to an end. This kind of fellow has a real interest in making people sick, and in upsetting the ideas of "good"

and "evil," "true" and "false," in a way which is dangerous to life and a slander against this world in which we live.

XXV

The history of Israel is of the utmost importance as an example of the progressive denaturalization of natural values. I give an account of five stages in this history to show what I mean. Originally, and particularly in the time of the kings, even Israel had the right attitude to everything, that is, the natural attitude. Israel's Jehovah expressed Israel's feeling of power: joy in Israel, and hope for Israel. To him the Israelites looked for victory and redemption, and through him they expected nature to give them what they needed—above all, rain. Jehovah is the God of Israel, and consequently a just God: such is the logic of any self-governed people who have a good conscience about their own sovereign power. In the religious ceremonial both aspects of this self-affirmation are expressed: it gives thanks for the great blessings of victory, and it gives thanks for the good seasons of the year, and for the increase of herds and crops.

This view of affairs remained the ideal for a long time, even after it had been woefully subverted by anarchy from within and the Assyrians from without. And the people still clung tenaciously to their loftiest vision of a King of Kings who was a good soldier and an upright judge: especially the typical prophet (critic and satirist) Isaiah. But every hope remained unfulfilled. The old God was unable to do what he used to be able to do. He ought to have been dropped. But what happened?— the idea of him was altered; the idea of him was denaturalized: this was the price they had to pay for keeping him at all. Jehovah, the "just" God, is no longer in harmony with Israel; no longer is he the expression of Israel's self-esteem: he has become a God on certain conditions . . . The idea of him became a weapon in the hands of priestly agitators who began to interpret all happiness as a reward and all misery as a punishment for disobedience to God, or for "sin" . . . And this is the most fraudulent of possible interpretations: by means of it a "moral order" is first established, and the natural ideas of cause and effect are stood upon their heads. Once natural causality has been swept away by "rewards" and "punishments," an unnatural causality is brought into being: and all other kinds of unnaturalness come following it. Behold a God who makes demands—instead of a God who helps, and advises, and is essentially a symbol for the happy inspirations of courage and self-reliance! Morality is no longer the expression of a people's vitality and urge to expansion: it has become abstract; it has become the adversary of life. Morality is now essentially a fantastic perversion, it is the "evil eye" watching everything a man does . . . What is Jewish, Christian, morality? It is fate robbed of its simplicity; misfortune besmirched with the idea of "sin"; prosperity interpreted as a dangerous temptation; physical infirmity made worse by the gnawings of conscience . . .

XXVI

The Jewish priestcraft falsified the idea of God and they falsified the idea of morality; but they did not rest content with this achievement. The whole history of Israel became superfluous—out it had to go! The priests actually achieved this miracle of falsification: witness the greater part of the Bible. With an unparalleled contempt for tradition and historical truth, they put a religious interpretation upon the chronicles of their own people, imposing a stupidly mechanical system of punishment for sins against Jehovah and rewards for piety to Jehovah. If centuries of ecclesiastical interpretation of history had not somewhat blunted our sense of rectitude in historical matters, we would resent such a shameful act of historical falsification far more than we do . . . And the philosophers second the priests. Throughout the whole development of philosophy, even the latest, they have lied about the "moral order." What is this "moral order"? It is a theory which implies that the will of God has established, once and for all, what ought to be done and what ought to be left undone. It implies that the worth of a nation or an individual is estimated by obedience or otherwise to this will of God: that the destinies of a nation or an individual are controlled by this God, who metes out rewards or punishments according to the obedience or otherwise shown to his will . . . And the actual answer to this miserable lie is as follows:—That a parasitical type of man, the priest, who can only live by battening upon healthy organisms, has taken the name of God in vain. The realm in which he as priest sets up standards of value he calls "the kingdom of God": the means by which he sets up his authority he calls "the will of God": and with a cold-blooded cynicism he presumes to judge nations, and individuals, and epochs, in accordance with their submission or otherwise to his priestly sway.

Observe how he sets to work! In the hands of the Jewish priests the Golden Age of Israel was transformed into an age of apostasy; the captivity, the long period of tribulation, was interpreted as a punishment for the Golden Age—in which priests didn't exist. The mighty freeborn heroes of Israel's history were described, for priestly purposes, either as hypocrites and bigots or as "Godless" men. The psychology of every important event was reduced to the idiotic formula of obedience or disobedience to God.

Then they went one stage further. "The will of God" (that is, the means used by priests to increase their power) had to be made known. A "revelation" became necessary. To put it plainly, a gross literary hoax had to be perpetrated: "Holy Scriptures" were brought to light, and were duly published forth with all due heirarchical pomp, and with days of penance and lamentations for the long period of "transgression." The "will of God," it appeared, had long been known; all the tribulation was due to the fact that "Holy Writ" had been disregarded . . . God had appeared to Moses . . . And what was the result? In brief, the priests had formulated, with meticulous pedantry, hard and fast rules for the tithes which were to be

paid to them, from the biggest to the smallest (not forgetting the choicest cuts of meat, for the priest likes beefsteak). Thus the priests made it clear just what the "will of God" is, just what they want for themselves . . .

From this time onward the priest became indispensable in every human event. At every natural function (birth, marriage, the sick-bed, death) the holy parasite puts in an appearance in order to denaturalize, or, in his words, to "bless" the event . . . For this must be noted: that every natural function, and every natural institution (the state, justice, marriage, care of the sick and destitute), every action based in the instinct to live, in fact everything which has a value in itself, is made worthless and even dangerous by the parasitism of the priests (or of the "moral world"): it is a sanction after the event, an artificial authority setting up values against nature, and thereby creating its own values . . . The priest frowns upon what is natural and calls it unholy: that is how he lives. Disobedience to God, that is, to the priest, is now called "sin"; the method of propitiating God, is, of course, the method which gives the priest more sway: it is the priest alone who can be an intermediary for "salvation." Psychologically considered, "sins" are absolutely necessary in every theocracy: they are the actual weapons of power; the priest lives upon sins; he must have people "sinning" . . . First principle: "God forgives those who repent," or in other words, "those who submit to the priest" . . .

XXVII

The Christian religion grew upon a soil of such utter falsification, where the deepest instincts of the ruling factions were opposed to nature and natural values to such an extent, that Christianity became a death struggle against reality which has never been surpassed. The "chosen people," who had adopted priestly names and priestly values for everything, who had been terribly logical in rejecting all earthly power as "unholy," "worldly," and "sinful"—this people now created a religious expression which was so logical that it began to attack Judaism itself. In the form of Christianity even the last kind of reality was denied, Jewish reality, the reality of the "people of God," of the "chosen people." The case is of great interest, for the small dissenting movement which grew around the name of Jesus of Nazareth is the same Jewish instinct at work again. The instinct nurtured by the priests has developed until it cannot put up any longer with the authority of the priests themselves: it has invented a new state of affairs even more unreal than the vision of the organized church. Christianity was actually set up in opposition to the church . . . At least, I fail to see against whom the revolt (said rightly or wrongly to have been led by Jesus) was directed if not against the Jewish church—"church" being here used in the same sense it has today.

It was a revolt against the "good and just men," against the "prophets of Israel," against the organized hierarchy—not against the

corruption of the hierarchy, but against caste, privilege, rank, and formalism. It was an expression of unbelief in the "elect," a denial of everything priestly and theological. But this movement itself gave rise to a hierarchy, if only temporarily, which was to become the skeletal structure supporting the Jewish people in "the flood waters." It was the last leg they had to stand on, the last flicker of their political autonomy: an attack upon it was an attack upon the deepest-rooted tribal instinct, the most tenacious national will to live that has ever existed on earth. This holy anarchist, who called upon the meek and lowly, the outcasts and "sinners," the chandala within Judaism, to rise against the ruling caste—using words, if the Gospels are to be believed, which would get him sent to Siberia today—was a political offender, so far as it was possible to be a political offender in such an absurdly non-political community. It was this which brought him to the cross: the proof of which is the inscription which was put upon the cross. He died for his own sins; and there is no ground for believing (no matter how often it is reiterated) that he died for the sins of others.

XXVIII

It is quite another question whether Jesus was aware of this alternative explanation of his acts, or whether his acts merely lent themselves to this alternative explanation. And now, for the first time, I refer to the psychology of the Savior. I confess that there are few books which I find so difficult to read as the Gospels. My difficulties are of another sort from those which enabled the learned curiosity of the German mind to achieve one of its most memorable triumphs. Many years have gone by since I, like every young scholar, enjoyed with the conscientous relish of the pernickity philologist, the work of the incomparable Strauss. I was then twenty years of age: now I am too serious for that sort of thing. What do I care for the contradictions of "tradition"? How far can the holy legends of the Gospel be called "tradition" at all! There is no form of literature more disputable than the legends of the saints: to examine them scientifically, without any contingent documents, seems to me to nullify the whole procedure—to be merely a learned waste of time . . .

XXIX

What interests me is the psychological character of the Savior —which might be studied in the Gospels, and in spite of the Gospels, despite their possible mutilation and irrelevancies: just as Francis of Assisi is revealed in his legends despite his legends. The point is not so much what Jesus did, or what he said, or how he actually met his death: it is whether we can form an idea what kind of man the Savior was, whether his character has been "handed down" to us. All the attempts I know of to construct the history of a "soul" from the Gospels seem to me to imply a deplorable levity in psychological matters. The two most ridiculous contributions to the study of the character of Jesus have been made by that clown in psychological matters, M. Renan: the idea of the "genius" and the idea of the "hero." Could

anything be less according to the Gospels than the heroic idea? The Gospels expound precisely the opposite of heroic conflict and the fighting instinct. They construct a moral code from the absence of pugnacity ("resist not evil" is the profoundest maxim in the Gospels, it provides a kind of key to them). Holiness, according to the Gospels, abides in peace, and gentleness, and the inability to fight. What is the import of the "glad tidings"? It is that true and eternal life has been found; it is not merely promised, it is here, it is in you; it is a life of love, love unabounded and free to all, love beyond measure. Everybody is a child of God—Jesus makes no special claims for himself—and as children of God, all are equal in his sight. Fancy making Jesus a hero!—also, how misleading is the term "genius"! What we mean by "intellect" had no meaning in the life of Jesus. On strictly psychological grounds, a totally different word is required . . . It is known that there is a condition of morbid irritability in the sense of touch, which causes the sufferer to recoil from contact with solid objects. This physical condition can be developed to its logical conclusion—the instinctive hatred of all reality, a flight into the "intangible" and the "incomprehensible"; an opposition to formalism; to the ideas of time and space; to the established order of things; to customs, and institutions; to the church: it can make a man feel at home in his own private world, into which actuality has ceased to intrude; in his "inner" world, his "true" world, his "eternal" world . . . "The Kingdom of God is within you" . . .

XXX

First, the instinctive hatred of actuality—this is the result of an extreme sensibility to pain and an irritability so great that it cannot bear "contact," because all contacts are too strong for it.

Secondly, the instinctive avoidance of conflicts, hatreds, and of all emotional heights and distances—this is the result of an extreme sensibility for pain and an irritability so great that it shrinks from struggling and the obligation to fight as an unbearable anguish (that is as self-destructive); and it finds blessedness (joy) only in non-resistance to evil and to danger—because love is the only and the last hope of keeping alive . . .

These are the two physiological realities upon which and from which the doctrine of salvation has grown. I call them a sublime development of hedonism upon a thoroughly morbid soil. The nearest thing to this was Epicureanism, the pagan view of salvation; even though it retained a big residue of Greek vitality and nervous strength. Epicurus was a decadent type, as I was the first to point out. The fear of pain, even of the slightest pain, can only lead in the end to a religion of love . . .

XXXI

I have already indicated my solution of the problem. The key to it is that we have only a distorted idea of the kind of man the Savior really was. The distortion is quite comprehensible: for many reasons such a type could not pass into legend pure, whole, and free

from additions. The surroundings in which this strange figure operated must have left their mark upon his legend, and even more so must the history and the fate of the early Christian communities: this must have embellished the record retrospectively, with many features that can only be understood in terms of religious war and propaganda. That strange and morbid world into which the Gospels lead us—a world like the plot of a Russian novel, in which the scum of society, neurosis, and "childish" imbecility are brought together—must inevitably have coarsened the legend of Jesus. The first disciples in particular must have transmuted a character full of symbolism and mysteriousness into terms of their own crude experience, in order to be able to understand him at all. For them the character of Jesus could only become real when cast in a more commonplace mold . . . The prophet, the Messiah, the future judge, the moral teacher, the miracle worker, John the Baptist—all of these traditions were only opportunities for misunderstanding the character of Jesus . . . Finally let us not underestimate the essential feature of all great adoration, particularly sectarian adoration: it tends to eliminate the original and often painfully unusual qualities from the object of worship—it doesn't even see them there. It is regrettable that no Dostoievsky lived in the neighborhood of this most interesting decadent—I mean someone who could have felt the poignant charm of such a mixture of the sublime, the sickly, and the childlike.

Finally of course there is always the possibility, not to be overlooked, that the original Savior was not one man only, but a number of complex and contradictory decadence-types. Probabilities, however, are against this, for if such were the case tradition would have been more definite and objective: so we must assume the contrary. Nevertheless there is a contradiction between the mountain-, sea-, and field-preacher, who seems to have been a kind of Buddha on a soil not completely unlike India's; and the aggressive fanatic, the deadly enemy of theologians and priests, who has been maliciously dignified by Renan as "the great master of irony." My own opinion is that most of this spleen (and even wit) in the character of the Master was added to it as a result of the intensity of Christian propaganda. We all know that sectarians have an unscrupulous habit of using their idol as a justification for themselves. When the early Christians needed an adroit, nimble-witted, combative, and maliciously hair-splitting theologian, to use against their theological opponents, they created their "God" according to their own needs: just as they attributed to him, upon occasion, the quite unevangelical ideas of the "second coming," and the "last judgment," and all sorts of hopes and promises in circulation at the time.

XXXII

I can only repeat that I protest against the ascription of the fanatical element to the character of the Savior: the word "imperious," which Renan uses, is utterly out of keeping with the Savior-type. The "glad tidings" of the Gospel mean nothing more than

that all arguments are done away with, for the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to children. This is no new belligerent creed that raises its voice—it is already there, it was there from the beginning: it is a spiritual return to childishness. Physiologists at least are familiar with cases of infantile regression, due to functional atrophy or to delayed puberty . . . Such a condition heaps no scorn, utters no sarcasms, brings no "sword"—it doesn't even define itself. Little does it realize how it will one day set man against man. To become established it requires no miracles, or rewards and promises, or "according-to-the-Scriptures"; for it is perpetually a miracle in itself, a reward and a promise and a "Kingdom of God" all in itself. And likewise this faith needs no formulation, for it exists by protecting itself against formalism.

Admittedly the incidentals of environment, language, and upbringing give a certain color to the ideas: the original Christianity is entirely Jewish and Semitic in conception (ceremonial eating and drinking at supper, for instance—an idea which the church very Jewishly abused). But we must be on our guard against seeing anything beyond symbolism, "Semiotics" and an opportunity for parables in the words of the first Christian. Only on the assumption that nothing he says is to be taken literally, can this anti-realist speak at all. Amongst Indians he would have used the ideas of Sankhya, and amongst Chinese the ideas of Lao-tse—without even noticing the difference. With a little liberty of phrase, Jesus might even be called a "Free Spirit"—he cares not at all for what is: death is in the word, death is in everything fixed and unchanging. The idea and the experience of "life" as he alone views it, is opposed to every kind of word, formalism, law, creed, and dogma. He speaks only of inner things: "life," or "truth" or "light" is his word for the inner sense. Everything else, the whole of reality, the whole of nature, even language, has only the value of a symbol and a metapor for him. It is of the utmost importance not to lose sight of this fact, whatever may be the inducements of Christian (that is, churchy) prejudice. Such a superb symbolist stands apart from all religion, worship, history, science, worldly-wisdom, knowledge, psychology, bookishness, and art—his "wisdom" consists in a "perfect innocence" of all such matters. Culture he has never heard of, consequently he has no need to attack it—he denies it not . . . The same applies to the state, to the whole civil and social organization, to labor, and to war. He has no grounds for denying "the world," for he knows nothing of what the church calls "the world" . . . He is totally incapable of denying anything. In the same way he shuns logic and does not believe that any faith or any "truth" can be provided by argument. His own proofs are "the light within," an internal feeling of blessedness and self-content, and pure "manifestations" of "strength." People who hold such a doctrine cannot contradict anything. They do not even realize that other points of view exist, or can exist. They are absolutely incapable of imagining anything opposed to their own way of thinking. If they happen to come up

against such a thing, they feel a profound sympathy with the "blindness" of the other fellow—for they themselves see the "light"—but they never venture to argue . . .

XXXIII

The essential psychology of the "Gospel" has nothing to do with guilt or punishment, or with reward. "Sin," which puts a barrier between man and God, is done away with—this is the true import of the "glad tidings." Blessedness is not merely promised, it is not offered conditionally, it is the only reality—all the rest is merely a symbolical elaboration of this simple tenet.

The outcome of such a conviction is the projection of a new way of life, the authentic way of life according to the Gospels. The Christly type of man is characterized not by a new "faith," but by a new mode of life, a distinctive new mode of life. He resists not those who do him evil, neither by words nor in his heart. He makes no distinction between strangers and his kindred, between Jews and Gentiles ("neighbor" really means co-religionist, Jew). He is moved to anger against no man. He makes no appeal to the law-courts, and does not acknowledge their jurisdiction; ("swear not at all"). He will not put his wife away from him, even if she be taken in adultery —and all this is based in one principle, it all follows from one instinct.

The life of the Savior was merely putting this into practice; and so was his death. He needed no formalism or ritual in his relationship with God—not even prayers. He abolished all the Jewish doctrines of repentance and atonement. He realized that it is only by a new way of life that man can be made to feel "Godly," "blessed," "saved," and a "child of God." Not by "repentance" and not by "prayers for forgiveness" is God attained: only the Gospel way of life leads to God, verily it is "God"!—the Gospel abolished Judaistic ideas of "sin," "forgiveness of sin," "faith," and "salvation by faith"—the whole Jewish church-lore was denied by the "glad tidings."

It is the deep-rooted instinct which lets a man feel he is "in Heaven" or even feel "eternal," whatever may be his apparent reasons for believing he is not "in Heaven"—this impulse alone is the psychological reality behind "salvation." It is a new way of life, and not a new creed . . .

XXXIV

If I understand anything about this great symbolist, it is this: that the only facts or "truths" for him were inner facts. Everything else, the whole of nature, time, space and history, were to him merely opportunities for parables. The "Son of Man" is not so much a concrete historical person, an isolated individual, as an "eternal" conception, a timeless psychological symbol.

The same applies most definitely to the God of this typical symbolist, to the "fatherhood of God." Nothing could be less Christlike than the churchy crudity about a personal God and a "Kingdom of God" to come, and a "Kingdom of Heaven" beyond, and a "Son of God" as the second person in the Trinity. All this, if I may be for-

given the phrase, is a smack in the eye of truth, or rather in the eye of the Gospels (what an eye!): it is a universal misuse of symbols which amounts to utter cynicism . . . The meaning of the "Father" and "Son" symbolism should be obvious; though not to everybody, I admit; the word "son" expresses a preliminary state of transfiguration (or beatitude), and the word "father" expresses the completed state, the actual feeling of eternity or perfection—I blush to have to mention what the church has done with this symbolism: it has set an amphitryon story upon the doorstep of the Christian "faith"! And in addition a doctrine of "immaculate conception"! . . . thereby defiling conception.

The "Kingdom of Heaven" is a state of the heart—not something which exists "above the earth" or happens "after death." The whole idea of dying naturally is absent from the Gospels: death is not a bridge to eternity, not a gate of entry: it is absent because it is relegated to an entirely different world of mere symbolism and metaphor. The "hour of our death" is not a Christly idea—neither "hours," nor time in general, nor the life of the body and its crises, exist for the bearer of "good tidings." The Kingdom of God is not something to which to look forward: it has no yesterday, no tomorrow, is not to come millennially—for it is a state of the heart—it is everywhere, and it is nowhere . . .

XXXV

This "bearer of glad tidings" died as he lived and as he taught—he died, not to save mankind, but to show men how to live. It was a way of life that he left behind him for men to follow: his attitude toward judges, soldiers, accusers—his attitude upon the Cross. He resists not, he defends himself not, he takes no steps to escape the final penalty; nay, more, he welcomes it . . . And he intercedes, suffers and loves for and on behalf of those who do him hurt . . . Defending himself not, showing no anger, blaming no one . . . Not even resisting evil—loving it . . .

XXXVI

We, who have become free spirits, are the first to understand what nineteen centuries have misunderstood—we have the instinct and the passionate integrity which wages war upon the "holy lie" more vigorously than upon any other lie . . . Mankind has been indescribably remote from our attitude of benevolent and cautious neutrality, from that discipline of the mind which alone enables strange guesses to be made, and subtle things to be received: with a shameless egotism men have always sought self-protection in these matters: in opposition to the Gospel, they set up the church . . .

Anyone seeking to prove that behind the great drama of existence is the finger of an ironical God, would find no small justification of his theory in the stupendous question-mark called Christianity. That mankind should bend the knee before what contradicts the original meaning and purpose of the Gospel: that in the idea of the "church" the very things are declared holy which the "bearer of glad tidings"

considered beneath him, and behind him—this would take some beating as a superb example of historical irony.

XXXVII

Our age prides itself on its historical sense: then how could it accept the nonsensical belief that the crude fable of the miracle-working Savior belongs to original Christianity—and that its spiritual and symbolical side was added later? On the contrary, the history of Christianity—from the death on the Cross onwards—is the history of a progressively clumsy misunderstanding of the original symbols. With every extension of Christianity to wider and ruder masses, who were increasingly less able to grasp its essentials, the need arose to vulgarize and barbarize Christianity more and more. It absorbed the teachings and rites of all the subterranean cults of the *Imperium Romanum*, and the rot of all kinds of sickly reasoning. The fate of Christianity is explained by the fact that it had to minister to sickly, base and vulger people—hence its principle of faith had to become sickly, base, and vulgar. It is as a church that sickly primitivism itself finally attains to power—as a church, organized in deadly hostility to every form of integrity, to nobility of soul, discipline of the mind, to everything humanly free and kindly. There are two sets of values, and it is we freed spirits who have first become aware of and pointed out the contradiction between them—Christian values on the one hand, noble values on the other!

XXXVIII

I cannot, at this point, avoid a sigh. There are days when I am overcome by a feeling blacker than the blackest melancholy—contempt of man. And I shall make it quite clear what I despise, and whom I despise: it is the man of today, the kind of man who is unfortunately my contemporary. The man of today—I am stifled by his fetid breath . . . For the past I feel, like all scholars, a great toleration, that is a generous self-control in judging: with a gloomy caution I review thousands of years of this madhouse-world: and whether it be called "Christendom," the "Christian faith," or the "Christian Church," I am careful not to hold man responsible for its mental disorders. But my gorge rises immediately when I survey the modern period, our period . . . For our age knows better . . . What was in former times merely sickliness, is nowadays positively indecent—it is indecent to be a Christian nowadays. And here is where my disgust begins—I look about me: not a word remains of what was formerly considered to be "truth": we cannot even bear to hear a priest pronounce the word "truth." A man with even the slightest pretensions to integrity must know nowadays that a theologian, a priest or pope, is not merely mistaken in every word he speaks, but that he lies and can no longer escape censure for lying "innocently" or "through ignorance." Even the priest knows, as everybody else knows, that there is no more "God" or "sins" or "Savior"; and that "free-will" and a "moral order" are lies—no serious or self-conscious man can pretend not to know this . . . All the conceptions of the Church are known for what they are—as the worst of counterfeits,

issued to debase nature and natural values: and the priest himself is known for what he is—as the most dangerous type of parasite, as the poison-spider of life . . . We know, and our conscience today tells us—what is the value of all the ghastly inventions of the priests and the church, and we know why they were invented. The state of self-defilement to which they have reduced humanity, is enough to make anybody spew. All the ideas of "the beyond," "the last judgment," the "immortality" of the "soul," and the "soul" itself—these are merely instruments of torture and a systematic cruelty used by priests to get power and to keep power . . . Everybody knows this, and yet things remain as before. What has happened to the last shred of decency and self-respect, when even our statesmen, who are in other ways liberal-minded men, and thoroughly un-Christian in practice, still profess and call themselves Christians and go to communion? . . . And a young prince at the head of his regiment, superb as an expression of the self-esteem and self-certainty of his people—and yet, without any shame, he lets himself be called a Christian! . . . Whom, then, does Christianity deny? What world does it renounce? To be a soldier, to be a judge, to be a patriot, to defend oneself, to set a value upon honor, to be self-seeking, to be proud . . . Every act of every day, every instinct, every principle which leads to action, is today anti-Christian: what an abortion of falsehood the modern man must be, to call himself a Christian without blushing for shame! . . .

XXXIX

I retrace my steps, and recount the authentic history of Christianity. The very word "Christianity" is a misnomer — essentially there was only one Christian, and he died on the Cross. The "Gospel" died on the Cross. What was thenceforward called "the Gospel" was the contradiction of what Christ had lived in his life; it was "evil tidings," a dysangel, not an evangel. It is false to the point of nonsense to see in "faith," particularly in the faith that Christ died to save sinners, a distinguishing mark of the Christian: only the Christly way of life, the life actually lived by him who died on the Cross, is truly Christian . . . Even today such a life is still possible; and for certain men it is even necessary. Genuine, primitive Christianity will be possible in all ages . . . It is not a creed but a course of action, or rather a course of non-action, a different kind of existence . . . As every psychologist knows, the importance of states of consciousness, kinds of faith, and opinions about truth, is absolutely negligible compared with the importance of the instincts: strictly speaking, the whole idea of spiritual causality is false. To define the Christian attitude, or Christliness, in terms of belief or of a state of mind, reduces Christliness to nothing. In fact, there are no Christians. The type that has been called "Christian" for two thousand years is only the effect of a psychological self-deception. Examined more closely, despite all his protestations of "faith," he has been motivated only by his instincts—and what instincts! "Faith" in all ages, for example in Luther's case, has only been a cloak, a pretext,

and a screen behind which the instincts played their game—a shrewd form of blindness to the work of certain of the instincts . . . I have already described "faith" as an essentially Christian form of shrewdness—men always talk about their "faith," but they act according to their instincts . . . In the Christian world of ideas there is nothing which even approaches reality—I have already pointed out that an instinctive hatred of reality is the driving force, in fact the only driving force, at the root of Christianity. What follows from this? That even psychologically, which is fundamentally and substantially, there is an error. Take away one idea and put only one reality in its place—and the whole of Christianity crumbles to nothing!

As seen from Olympus, this strangest of all phenomena—a religion not only specializing in error, but concentrating upon the genial invention of errors which are poisonous to the heart of life—must be a spectacle for the Gods: for the Gods who are philosophers, I mean; those I met, for instance, in the celebrated dialogues at Naxos. When they can overcome their nausea (and when we can!) they will be thankful for the amusing exhibition given by the Christians: perhaps this curious case is the only thing on our wretched little planet, earth, worthy of a Godly glance, and of Godly interest . . . Let us not therefore undervalue the Christian: deceitful to the point of innocence, he is far beyond the apes—in its application to Christians a certain theory of descent is a very pretty compliment.

XL

The fate of the Gospel was decided by a death—it hung upon the "Cross" . . . It was a death, that instrument usually reserved only for *canaille*, it was this appalling paradox which first brought home to the disciples the riddle: "Who was that? What was that?" The feeling of utter dismay, and the sense of deep injury, the suspicion that such a death might overthrow their cause, the terrible questioning "Why just so?" can well be imagined. In such a state of mind everything must be shown as necessary, everything must have a meaning and a reason, the highest reason: the devotion of a disciple makes no allowance for accident. For the first time a chasm stood yawning before them: "Who put him to death? Who was his enemy?"—the question flashed like a stroke of lightning. Answer: The Jewish ruling class, the dominant Judaism! From that moment the disciples were in revolt against the social order; and they attributed to Jesus, somewhat late, an attitude of revolt against the social order. Hitherto this militant, contradictory and pugnacious trait in his character was not noticeable: rather, the contrary was in evidence. Obviously the small sect had no understanding whatever of the principal lesson of Jesus' death: the example of freedom from and superiority to resentment—which shows how little they understood him at all! All that Jesus could hope to achieve by his death, as such, was to give the strongest public example and proof of his teachings . . . But his disciples were far from inclined to forgive his death—which would have been a course of action according to the

Gospel in the highest sense. Neither were they prepared to offer themselves, with meekness and love in their hearts, for a similar sacrifice . . . On the contrary, they now became possessed of the most un-Christly desire for revenge. It was impossible for the movement to die out with his death: "Retribution" and "judgment" were called for (as if anything could be less Christly than "retribution," "punishment" and "sitting-in-judgment"!) Once more the popular hope in a Messiah came into prominence: a great moment in history was anticipated: the "Kingdom of God" is coming to do justice upon God's foes . . . Oh, but this is a complete misunderstanding! The "Kingdom of God" as the last act, as a promise! In his lifetime the evangel had been the incarnation, the fulfilment and the reality of the "Kingdom." His death was a realization of the "Kingdom of God." It was only now that all the anger and bitterness against the Pharisees and theologions became attributed to the Master—and they made him thus into a Pharisee and a theologian himself!—in addition the primitive adoration of these completely unbalanced souls could not be satisfied with the Gospel equality of all men as children of God, which Jesus had taught; and their revenge took the form of elevating him incomprehensibly above themselves: just as, previously, the Jews had sought revenge upon their foes by placing their God on high at a great distance above them. The one God and the only-begotten Son: both were the outcome of resentment.

XLI

And from that time onwards an absurd problem arose: "How could God have allowed it?" To which the disordered minds of the small community gave an answer terrifying in its absurdity: God gave his Son as a sacrifice for the forgiveness of sins. At one stroke the Gospel was abolished! Sin offering, and in its most repellent and barbaric form, the sacrifice of the innocent for the sins of the guilty—how appallingly heathen! Jesus himself had done away with the idea of "guilt"—he denied that there was any guilt fixed between God and men; his life expressed this unity between God and men, which was his "glad tidings" . . . And he did not teach it as a mere privilege!

From that time onwards the character of the Savior was gradually degraded by the addition of the doctrine of the last judgment and the second coming, the doctrine of his death as a sacrifice, the doctrine of the resurrection, by means of which the whole idea of "blessedness," the one and only reality of the Gospels, is conjured away—and replaced by a state of happiness beyond the grave! . . . Paul, with that rabbinical impudence which characterizes everything he did, gave a logical color to this obscene conception, as follows: "Unless Christ rose from the dead, then all our faith is in vain!" And spontaneously there was derived from the Gospel the most contemptible of all unattainable hopes, the impertinent doctrine of personal survival . . . Paul himself even preached it as a reward! . . .

XLII

It is now possible to see what came to an end with the death on the Cross: a new and thoroughly original attempt to establish a Buddhistic pacifist movement, to achieve a real and not merely promised happiness on earth. For, as I have already pointed out, there is an essential difference between these two religions of decadence: Buddhism promises nothing but achieves something; Christiantiy promises everything but achieves nothing—the "glad tidings" were followed closely by the worst of all possible tidings: those of Paul. Paul is the incarnation of a type completely opposed to the "bearer of glad tidings": his genius lies in hate, in the vision of hate, in the remorseless logic of hate. What a sacrifice indeed, this dysangelist made to—hate! Above all he sacrificed the Savior: he nailed him to his own Cross. After this specialist in hate had finished with it, and made it conform to his own purposes, nothing whatever remained of the life and the example and the teachings and the death and the meaning and the law of the Gospel. Certainly not reality, and certainly not historical truth! . . . And once more the priestly instinct of a Jew perpetrated the same old crime against history—he deleted what had gone before in the history of Christianity and himself invented a history of Christian origins. He did more: he submitted the history of Israel to yet another falsification, so as to make it appear as a mere prologue to his own obsession; according to him, all the prophets had his "Savior" in mind . . . Later on the church even falsified the history of mankind so as to make it seem a prologue to Christianity . . . The character of the Savior, his teaching, his way of life, his death, the meaning of his death, and even the sequel to his death—were all altered until nothing in the record even remotely approximated to fact. Paul simply transferred the center of gravity of the whole of Christ's life to a point beyond this life on earth—and his method was the lie about the "resurrection" of Jesus. Basically, he had no use for the life of the Savior—he required the death on the Cross, and then something beyond . . . It would be sheer folly on the part of a psychologist to regard a man like Paul (whose spiritual home was Stoicism) as an honest man, when he constructs out of an hallucination a proof of the resurrection of the Savior; or even to believe that he actually experienced the hallucination. Paul desired the end, and therefore he willed the means. . . What he didn't believe himself, was believed in by the idiots amongst whom he spread his teachings—his lust was for power; Paul is the priest striving for power—he only had use for ideas, teaching and symbols with which to tyrannize over masses and to organize mobs. What was the only tenet of Christianity which Mahomet subsequently borrowed? Paul's invention, his method of setting up priestly tyranny and swaying the mob: the belief in personal survival—namely, the doctrine of the "Judgment."

XLIII

When life's center of gravity is transferred from life itself to

the "beyond"—that is, to annihilation—then life is entirely thrown off its balance. The gross lie of personal survival undermines reason and every natural instinct—henceforth every beneficent instinct that promotes life and guarantees the future is looked upon with suspicion. The meaning of life has now become that there is no meaning in life . . . Why be public-spirited? Why take any pride in origins and ancestry? Why labor together, or trust one another, or be concerned with the general well-being and try to advance it? . . . All this is merely a "temptation," a deviation from the straight and narrow way. Only one thing is needful . . . All "immortal souls" are equal; in an infinite universe the "salvation" of every individual may claim an eternal importance; petty bigots and people three-parts mad may assume that the laws of nature are constantly suspended for their sake—it is impossible to have too much contempt for such an insolent glorification of all kinds of selfishness to infinity. And yet Christianity owes its triumph to just such a miserable flattery of personal vanity. It was by this means that it lured to its side all the misbegotten and depressed, the fallen-upon-evil-days, the whole offal and scum of mankind.

The "salvation of the soul," or in other words, "the world revolves around me" . . . the poisonous doctrine of "equal rights for all"—it is this which Christianity has propagated very efficiently. Issuing from the most secret recesses of bad instinct, the Christian religion has waged a war to the death against all feelings of reverence and distinction amongst men, which is the foundation of every advance in civilization. It has forged the resentment of the masses into a weapon against us; against everything noble, joyous and high-minded on earth—against our happiness on earth . . . The most vicious outrage against a higher type of man was to grant immortality to every Peter and Paul.

And let us not underestimate the fatality which Christianity has inflicted upon political theory! Nowadays no one has the courage to claim privilege and rank, or to exercise the feeling of pride in himself and his peers—the loneliness of the elect. The lack of this courage is what ails our politics! Aristocratic poise has been undermined by the lie of equality of souls. A belief in the "greatest good of the greatest number" causes and will continue to cause revolutions; but it is Christianity—make no mistake—and the values of Christianity which convert every revolution into blood and crime! Christianity is a revolt of all creeping things against the seats of the mighty: the Gospel of the lowly lays low . . .

XLIV

The Gospels are invaluable as evidence of the corruption which had already attacked the early Christian community. At the death of the Savior a process of decay began which Paul, with the cynical logic of a Rabbi, merely developed to its conclusion. These Gospels cannot be read with too much care; there are difficulties in every word of them. I admit, and I hope it will not be held against me, that it

is this very fact which makes them such a delight for a psychologist. For they are the reverse of a merely naive corruption, they represent an ultimate refinement, an artistic triumph of mental rottenness. The Gospels stand by themselves. The Bible as a whole is not to be compared with them.

Here we are among Jews: this is the first thing to be remembered if we don't wish to lose the scent. In this book, the illusion of personal "holiness," which literally amounts to genius, and has never been even approached in other books or by other men; the elevation of deceit in attitude and phrase to the status of an art —is not any accident due to the exceptional talents of any one individual. It is a racial matter. In the formulation of Christianity, the art of concocting holy lies, which is the essence of Jewishness, after many centuries of earnest apprenticeship and practice in Judea, has reached technical perfection. The Christian, who is the last word in falsity, is the Jew repeating his type—thrice a Jew . . . The basic desire only to make use of ideas, symbols, and gestures, which accord with the priestly edifice, and the instinctive rejection of every other way of thinking and every other method of arriving at values and utilities—all this is not merely a matter of tradition, it is something inherited; for only heredity could explain the fact that it works like second nature. The whole of humanity, even the best minds of the best ages (with one exception, who is perhaps hardly human) have let themselves be deceived. The Gospels have been studied as a work of simplicity . . . No small tribute to the technical perfection with which the trick has been accomplished.

Frankly, if we could only see, even for a moment, these prodigious cranks and pseudo-saints, that would be an end of them—and it is because I cannot read a word of theirs without seeing through their pose, that I have made an end of them . . . I can't stand a way they have of rolling up their eyes. (Fortunately books are only something to read for most people.)

We shouldn't let them pull wool over our eyes. "Judge not!" they say, yet they consign to Hell everybody who opposes them. Although they leave judgment to God, yet they sit in judgment themselves: when they glorify God, they glorify themselves: when they require men to profess the virtues which come easy to them (in fact which they must profess if they are not to go under) they assume the appeaance of making an effort to be virtuous, or of letting virtue triumph. They pretend to live, and die, and sacrifice themselves for virtue (or for "truth," or for the "light," or for the Kingdom of God) when as a matter of fact they are only doing what they cannot help doing. It is their nature to be sneaky, to hide away in corners and to slink along in the shadows; and so they hypocritically convert their necessity into a duty. They justify their humble lives on grounds of duty so that even their humility is used as one more proof of their piety . . . Oh what a humble, and chaste, and charitable species of humbug! "Virtue itself shall bear witness for us" . . . The Gospels are handbooks of moral seduction: these petty fellows

appropriate morality—how well they know its use! Morality is the best method of leading humanity by the nose!—the fact is that by means of morality conceited people who believe themselves to be the chosen, put on a cloak of modesty. With conscious conceit they range themselves definitely on the side of the "truth"—and the best of mankind, the "world," they place on the other. This is perhaps the most fatal form of megalomania that has ever existed on the earth: little misgotten bigots and liars began to claim exclusive understanding of the ideals of "God," "truth," "the light," "the spirit," "love," "wisdom," and "life" as if these things were the peculiar property of themselves; and by means of them they sought to fence themselves off from the "world."

Little super-Jews, fit only for the madhouse, reversed all values to suit themselves, as if the followers of Christ alone were the meaning, the salt, the standard, and even the supreme court of mankind . . . Such a calamity was only possible because a species of megalomania, similar to this one, and racially like it (orthodox Jewish) was already in existence. When a division appeared between official Jews and Christian Jews, the latter had no alternative left but to employ the self-protective measures peculiar to the Jewish instinct: and they used this device even against the Jews themselves, whereas the Jews had used it only against Gentiles. The Christian is only a nonconformist Jew.

XLV

I give a few examples of the kind of thing these trivial people stuffed into their heads, the kind of thing they put into the mouth of the Master: the pure and unadulterated creed of "beautiful souls."

And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a temtimony against them. Verily I say unto you, it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city. (*Mark VI*, 11.)

—What joyful tidings!

And whosoever shall offend one of these little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea. (*Mark IX*, 42.)

—What joyful tidings!

And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire; where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. (*Mark IX*, 47.)

—He should pluck out more than his eye . . .

Verily I say unto you, that there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power. (*Mark IX*, 1.)

—Well lied, lion . . .

Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For . . .

(*Mark VIII*, 34.)

—(Note of a psychologist: Christian morality is refuted by its "fors" —its justifications condemn it—this is what makes it Christian.)

Judge not, that ye be not judged. With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. (*Matthew VII*, 1.)

—A curious notion of a "just" judge!

For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? Do not even the publicans so? (*Matthew V*, 46.)

—Principle of "Christian" love: it wants to get something extra for itself . . .

But if ye forgive men not their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. (*Matthew VI*, 15.)

—Very embarrassing for the Father!

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. (*Matthew VI*, 33.)

—"All these things" mean food, clothing, and the necessities of life. A mistake, to put it mildly . . . Just before, God appears as a kind of tailor, in special cases . . .

Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven: for in the like manner did their fathers unto the prophets. (*Luke VI*, 23.)

—The impertinent rabble compares itself with the prophets!

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy, for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are. (*Paul*, 1 *Corinthians, III*, 16.)

—This roundabout argument is utterly beneath contempt.

Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world? and if the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? (*Paul*, 1 *Corinthians, VI*, 2.)

—Unhappily this is not merely the ravings of a lunatic . . . The frightful impostor continues thus:

Know ye not that we shall judge angels? How much more things that pertain to this life?

Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For after that in the wisdom of God, the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe . . . not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the Wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen; yea and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence. (*Paul*, 1 *Corinthians, I*, 20 *et seq.*)

—to interpret this passage, which is of considerable importance as an exposition of Chandala-morality, the reader should refer to my "Genealogy of Morals," in which the distinction is plainly stated between a noble morality and a morality of resentment and impotent vengefulness. Paul was the greatest Apostle of revenge who has ever lived.

XLVI

What follows then? That it is advisable to put on gloves before handling the New Testament. The presence of so much filth makes this precaution advisable. We would as soon hob-nob with Polish Jews as with early Christians: and there is no necessity to elaborate our objection . . . Neither smells good—I have searched the New Testament in vain for a single sympathetic touch; there is nothing in it

which is free, kindly, open-hearted or upright. In this book definitely mankind makes no step forward—because it lacks the instinct of cleanliness . . . Only the base instincts are expressed in the New Testament and it lacks even courage in regard to these. The whole thing is cowardice, the whole thing is wilful shutting of the eyes and self-deception. Any other book appears clean when a man has just finished reading the New Testament; to give an example, immediately after laying down Paul, I took up with delight that most charming and wanton scoffer, Petronius, of whom it might be said what Domenico Boccaccio wrote to the Duke of Parma about Cesare Borgia: *"E tutto festo"*—he is immortally healthy, immortally cheerful and well-balanced . . .

These trivial fanatics make a most important mistake in their calculations. They attack, but whatever they attack is thereby distinguished. He whom a Christian father attacks is not injured . . . On the contrary, it is an honor to have a Christian father as an opponent. It is impossible to read the New Testament without a feeling of admiration for everything abused in it, in particular for "worldly wisdom," which an impudent wind-bag tries in vain to abolish by the empty folly of preaching . . . Even the Scribes and Pharisees gain stature by such an attack: they must almost have been worth something to merit such immoderate hate. They were accused of hypocrisy—as if this were a charge that early Christians had any right to make—but after all the Scribes and Pharisees were a privliged class: this is enough to explain the rage of the Chandala. The first Christians, I fear (like the last Christians, whom I may live to see) are rebels by profound instinct against all privilege—they live and struggle perpetually for "equal rights" . . . Strictly speaking, they have no alternative. When people claim to be personally God's chosen or the "Temple of God" or a "Heavenly Host," it follows that every other principle of distinction based upon honesty, intelligence, manliness and pride, or upon beauty and freedom of the spirit, must be dismissed as "worldly" and evil . . .

The moral is that every word in the mouth of a "Christian father" is a lie, and his every action is distinctly dishonest—all his values and his aims are dangerous—but whomever he hates and whatever he hates has a real value . . . It is thus that the Christian and more particularly the Christian priest sets up a standard of value.

Need I add that in the whole of the New Testament there is only one figure worthy of respect? Pilate the Roman Governor. To take a Jewish quarrel seriously was more than he could bring himself to do. One Jew more or less—what did it matter . . . The noble scorn of a Roman, in whose presence the word "truth" had been shamefully bandied about, has enriched the New Testament with the only phrase in it of any value—and this phrase not only criticizes but actually destroys the New Testament—"What is truth?" . . .

XLVII

The distinction between us and Christians is not in the fact that we can find no God in history or nature, but that we look upon what

is called "God" as pitiable, absurd, and dangerous rather than as Godly; and not as a mere error but as a crime against life . . . We deny that "God" is God. Even if somebody showed us this God of the Christians, we should be still less inclined to believe in him. In a formula: God, as Paul created him, is the negation of God.

A religion like Christianity which doesn't come in contact with reality at any point, which collapses if reality intrudes at any point, must inevitably be opposed to "worldly wisdom," that is to science—and it will describe as good any methods which may be used to poison, slander and decry mental discipline, lucidity, intellectual probity, and intellectual aloofness and freedom. "Faith" as an imperative vetoes science, for it is based in lies at any price. Paul knew very well that lying—namely "faith"—was essential. In due course the church learned Paul's lesson.

The God which Paul invented for himself, the God who "reduced the wisdom of the world to absurdity" (particularly philology and medicine, the two great foes of superstition), is in effect simply the expression of Paul's own determination to do this. He called his own will God ("Thora") in a typically Jewish manner. Paul wanted to banish the "wisdom of the world." His enemies were the competent philologists and doctors of the Alexandrine school—it is against them that he contends. As a matter of fact, a man cannot well be a doctor or a philologist without also being an Antichrist. The philologist sees through the "Holy Scriptures," and the doctor sees through the physical degeneracy of the average Christian. The doctor says "incurable": the philologist says "fraud" . . .

XLVIII

Has anybody ever really understood the celebrated story at the beginning of the Bible about God's holy terror of science? . . . It has not been understood. This supreme priestly book naturally begins by stating the chief inner difficulty of the priest, who has only one great danger to face—consequently, God has to face only one great danger. The old God, a pure "spirit," a pure high priest, and wholly perfect, is wandering in a leisurely fashion around his garden: but he is bored. Against boredom even the Gods contend in vain. So what does he do? He creates man—for man is a distraction. . . But behold, man also begins to get bored. God's compassion for the only kind of misery peculiar to all Paradises, is infinite, so he forthwith creates other animals. This is God's first error of judgment: man was not amused—he mastered the animals; he wouldn't remain an animal himself. So God created women and admittedly this put an end to boredom—but also to many other things! Woman was God's second error of judgment. "Woman is a serpent" ("Heva"): every priest knows this—and evil came into the world through woman, every priest knows this also. It follows that she is to blame for knowledge . . . It was woman who prompted man to taste of the tree of knowledge.

What is the explanation of all this? It is that the old God fell into a panic. His greatest blunder had been in creating man, for

man could become a rival to himself. Knowledge makes men like unto Gods—it is all up with priests and Gods when mankind becomes scientific! Knowledge is the first of sins, the germ of all sins, the original sin. One thing alone is moral—ignorance—the rest follows from it.

God's state of panic, however, didn't spoil his cunning. For a long time his chief problem was, how to protect himself against science. Answer: Out of Paradise with man! Happiness and leisure give rise to thought—and all thinking is bad . . . Thou shalt not think.

And so the transcendental priest proceeds to invent suffering, death, the dangers of pregnancy and all kinds misery, decreptitude, affliction, and above all, sickness—and all these are only weapons in God's war upon knowledge! For trouble keeps a man from thinking . . . Yet notwithstanding these precautions—oh horror! the edifice of knowledge begins to arise, towering aloft, storming heaven, threatening the Gods!—what is to be done? The old God invents war, he separates the peoples, makes men destroy one another (the priests always have needed war) . . . War—amongst other things a great disturber of science—but alas! knowledge and emancipation from the priests increases in spite of war. So the old God takes his final decision: "Mankind is becoming too scientific—there is no help for it: let him be drowned!"

XLIX

I have been understood. At the very beginning of the Bible the psychology of the priest is completely exposed. There is only one really great danger for the priest—that is science, or the solid understanding of cause and effect. But the development of science requires on the whole favorable circumstances—leisure, and mental energy to spare, are necessary for the pursuit of knowledge . . . Therefore in all ages the logic of the priest has been to make people miserable.

It will be realized what follows from this line of thought: it was this which brought "sin" first into the world. . . The idea of sin and punishment, the whole "moral order," was invented to be a barrier against knowledge—to prevent men emancipating themselves from the priests . . . It is not the external world which should be investigated, but the internal world. It is wrong to investigate cautiously and thoroughly; it is wrong to make any investigation at all: it is right to keep on suffering . . . to keep on suffering so that the priest will always be needed.

Away with medicine! It is a "Savior" that is needed! The ideas of sin and punishment including the doctrines of "grace," "salvation," and "forgiveness" (all lies through and through without a shred of psychological reality behind them) were invented in order to destroy humanity's sense of causality: they are an attack on cause and effect!—but not an attack with the fist, or the knife, or openly in hate and love; but an attack prompted by the instincts of cowardice, cunning and degeneracy! A priest's attack! A parasite's attack! A blood-sucking attack by subterranean vampires! . . .

When the natural consequences of an action are no longer looked upon as natural, but are considered to be produced by the phantasms of superstition, by "God," "ghosts," and "souls," and appear as "moral" consequences, as rewards, punishments, guidance and revelation—then the whole basis of knowledge is destroyed; and the greatest possible crime against humanity has been committed.

Sin, I repeat, this supreme form of human self-pollution, was invented in order to prevent the development of science and culture and educational advancement; it is thanks to the invention of sin that the priest has become dominant.

L

At this stage I cannot omit dealing with the psychology of faith, naturally so as to be of some assistance to the "faithful" themselves. If there is anybody nowadays who does not realize how disgusting it is to be one of the "faithful"—or what a sign of decadence, and what a breakdown of the will-to-live this implies—then he will have no excuse for ignorance in the future. My word can reach even the deaf . . . Unless I am greatly mistaken, the chief criterion of truth amongst Christians is what is called "proof by grace": faith beatifies, therefore it is true. To this it might be objected that salvation is not proved because it is promised, and that blessedness is an essential condition of faith: blessed are the believers . . . But how can proof be given that what the priest promises to the faithful will really be performed—namely that the undemonstrable life after death is a fact?

The alleged proof by grace is itself essentially an article of belief, inasmuch as it assumes that what faith expects cannot fail to materialize. The syllogism is: "I believe that faith redeems—therefore it is true"—surely this settles the argument! Any such "therefore" would be the *reductio ad adsurdum* of a logical proof.

But let us assume for the sake of politeness that blessedness through faith is proved (not merely desired and not merely promised by the suspect lips of a priest)—even so could such beatitude, or in technical phrase "joy" ever be a demonstration of truth? Sensations of pleasure have so little to do with answering the question, "What is true?" that actually they have to be regarded with suspicion when answering that question. Proof through pleasure is a proof of pleasure—that is all. Why on earth should it be assumed that true judgments give more pleasure than false ones, and that, in accordance with a preestablished harmony, the truth brings pleasure in its train?

The experience of all strong and profound minds is quite the contrary. Man has had to fight every inch of the way to truth. The price paid has been everything that the heart, and our love, and our trust cling to. This needs greatness of soul: for the service of truth is the hardest of all.

What, then, is the meaning of integrity in things of the mind?—that a man must discipline his emotion, eschew "beautiful feelings,"

and be conscientious in his yes and no!—faith beatifies: therefore it lies . . .

LI

The fact that faith in certain circumstances beatifies, the fact that an obsession of beatitude isn't necessarily true beatitude, the fact that faith does not actually move mountains, though it may raise them out of nothing—all this becomes perfectly evident if we happen to take a casual stroll through any madhouse. Not of course, to a priest: for he instinctively denies that sickness is sickness or that a madhouse is a madhouse. Christianity requires sickness just as the Greeks required abounding health—making people sick is actually the ulterior motive of the whole procedure of salvation in the church. And the church aims at being a universal madhouse. Its ultimate ideal is to convert the whole earth into a madhouse.

The kind of proselyte the church requires is the typical decadent. When a religious revival takes hold of any set of people, it is always characterized by neurotic outbreaks; the "world within" religious people is astonishingly like the "world within" overstrung and hysterical people. The "states of exaltation" which Christianity holds up before mankind as being of the highest value, are merely epileptoid in character—the church has canonized only madmen or those who have swindled "to the greater glory of God" . . . At one time I ventured to describe the whole Christian training for penance and salvation (now best studied in England) as a "whirling madness" methodically cultivated upon a soil thoroughly well prepared for it, that is, a profoundly morbid soil. It is not everybody who can be a Christian; a man is not "converted" to Christianity—he merely sickens for it.

We others, who have the courage to be both healthy and also disdainful, have every reason to despise a religion that abuses the body! that clings to the old superstition about the "soul"! that makes a "virtue" out of malnutrition! that fights against health as a kind of enemy, devil, and temptation! We have every reason to despise a religion which considers that it is possible to carry around a "pure" soul in a cadaverous body, and therefore invented for itself a new concept of "perfection," making it a pale, sickly, idiotically-ecstatic expression of "holiness," which is itself merely a symptom of an under-fed, enervated, and incurably disordered body! . . .

The Christian movement in Europe, from the very beginning, was no more than a general conglomeration of all kinds of human refuse and scum (who seek power through Christianity). It did not begin in Europe as the result of the decline and fall of any one nation; but rather was it an accumulation of decadent elements coming from all directions, which flocked together like birds of a feather. Christianity was not, as some believe, produced by the corruption of the ancient world, of the noble ancient world; the learned imbeciles who pretend it was cannot be too strongly contradicted; for at the time when Christianity reached the sickly and decaying rabble

in the Roman empire, the very contrary type, the noble Roman, existed at his mature best.

The majority triumphed; the democracy of Christian instinct became uppermost . . . Christianity was not "national," it was not race-conscious—it made its appeal to the disinherited everywhere, and it had its allies everywhere. The Christian religion is basically an expression of the rancor of the sick directed against the healthy. Everything well-set-up, proud, high-spirited, and above all everything beautiful, is offensive in its sight. Again let me refer to the priceless words of Paul—"And God hath chosen the weak things, the foolish things of the world, the base things of the world, and things which are despised"; this was the rallying-cry: *"In hoc signo"* it was decadence that triumphed.

God on the Cross—will the terrible meaning of this symbolism never be understood? It means that everything that suffers and hangs on crosses is divine . . . We all hang on the Cross, consequently we are all divine . . . We alone are divine . . . It was thus that Christianity triumphed, and a nobler attitude of mind went under before it—to this day Christianity remains the greatest calamity which has befallen mankind . . .

LII

Christianity also stands in opposition to spiritual well-being—it can only make use of sick reasoning; it takes the side of everything morbid; it utters anathemas against "the intellect," and against the arrogance of healthy minds. Since sickness is absolutely essential to the Christian religion, it follows that the Christian prerequisite, "faith," must also be a kind of illness, and that all straight, honest and scholarly paths to knowledge must encounter the ban of the church: thus doubt in itself is sinful . . . The total lack of mental cleanliness in a priest (which shows itself in his looks) is an effect of decadence. One has only to study the bahavior of hysterical women, and rickety children, to observe to what extent instinctive shiftiness, lying for lying's sake, and the inability to look straight or to walk straight, are the expression of decadence.

"Faith" is only the refusal to face facts as they are. Pious people and priests of either sex are shifty, because they are sick: their instinct is against facing what is really wrong with them. In the opinion of the faithful, whatever causes illness is good, and everything arising in superabundance of health and energy, is evil. The sign which I look for in a would-be theologian is the tendency to be shifty.

Another characteristic of the theologian is his inability to understand the use of words, or philology. And what I mean here by philology is its general application—the art of reading properly, without misunderstanding facts in terms of a prior interpretation and without losing patience or neglecting caution and subtlety in the effort to understand. I regard philology as a habit of scepticism in interpretation of everything, from books and newspapers to human

destinies and weather reports—not to mention the salvation of the soul! . . .

The way in which a theologian, whether in Berlin or in Rome, interprets a "passage of Scripture" or a current event, such as a victory of his fatherland, in the light of the Psalms of David, is so audacious that it would make a philologist's hair stand on end. And what shall he do when pietists and other cows from Swabia make use of the "finger of God" to convert their humdrum exitence into a miracle of "grace," of "providence," and of salvation? The most modest exercise of intelligence, not to mention decency, would be enough to convince these professional "interpreters" of the absolute childishness and unworthiness of such an application of God's prestidigitation.

However slight may be our piety, a God who always cured us of a cold in the head at the right time, or who put us into our coach whenever it started to rain would be an absurd God who would have to be abolished even if he did exist. God as a domestic servant, as a messenger, as a chief steward—is essentially the same thing as an utterly stupid calamity. The kind of "Providence" which is believed in at the present day by at least every third man in "scholarly Germany" would be an argument against God, in fact it would be the strongest possible argument against God. But in any case, it is an argument against Germans! . . .

LIII

The idea that martyrdom has anything to do with establishing the truth of a cause is so absurd that I am inclined to deny that martyrs have ever had anything to do with establishing truth. The very tone of voice in which a martyr flings his little piece of truth at humanity's head usually betrays such a low degree of intelligence, and such a disregard for the real problem of truth, that there is never any need even to refute him. Truth is not something which one man has and another man lacks: only peasants and peasant-apostles like Luther could think of truth in such a silly way. We may rest assured that the more conscientious a man is in intellectual matters, the more reticent he will become on this point. Fancy understanding five things, and dismissing all others with a wave of the hand! . . .

Truth as it is understood by every prophet, sectarian, free-thinker, socialist, and churchman is an absolute proof that such people haven't even begun the effort in mental discipline and self-control which is necessary for the discovery of even the smallest grain of truth.

Incidentally the death of the martyrs has been a great misfortune in history—it has led people astray . . . The conclusion which all imbeciles, women, and plebeians arrive at, that there must be something in a cause for which men face death (or which, as in early Christianity, for instance, starts whole epidemics of death-seeking) has been a tremendous brake upon the spirit of cautious

investigation. Martyrs have actually damaged the cause of truth . . . Even to this day the mere fact of persecution is enough to give an honorable name to any obscure sect. What? Is a cause in any way altered by the fact that somebody has died for it? An error which has acquired an honorable name is still an error, but it has acquired one more seductive appeal. Do not imagine, my dear theologians, that we shall allow you to be martyred for your lies!

The best way to dispose of any cause is to put it respectfully on ice—that is the way the theologians will ultimately be disposed of. This has been, throughout all human history, the characteristic folly of all persecutions: they paid too much respect to what they opposed, in conferring upon it the fascination of martyrdom . . . Women still bend on their knees today before an error, because they have been told that someone died on the Cross for it. Then is the Cross an argument?

But about all these matters only one person has said what has been needed for thousands of years—Zarathustra:

They wrote in blood on the way as they passed, and in their folly they taught that blood proves the truth.

But blood is the worst witness to truth; blood envenoms pure doctrine and turns it to madness and hate.

And what is proved when a man goes through fire for his faith?—truly it is better that a man's own wisdom should be fashioned in his own flame!

LIV

Let us make no mistake: great minds are skeptical. Zarathustra is a skeptic. The strength and the freedom which arise from exceptional power of thought express themselves in skepticism. When it is a question of deciding fundamental values or lack of values, men of confirmed prejudices are of no account. Men of prejudices are in chains. They do not see far enough, they do not look down from a height: whereas a man who would venture to discuss values or lack of values must be able to look down upon hundreds of prejudices—to look backwards at them . . . A mind which aspires to great things and is determined to achieve them is of necessity skeptical. Freedom from prejudice and the ability to view things dispassionately are a mark of strength . . . The essential driving force of a skeptic's existence is a great passion, which is more enlightened and more despotic than he is himself, seizes upon his intellect and presses it into service; it makes him unscrupulous; it gives him the courage to use unholy means to achieve his end; and in certain circumstances it even allows him to be prejudiced. If prejudice is used as a means, much may be achieved by it. Great passion utilizes and discards prejudices, according to its purpose in hand; but it does not submit to them, because it is autonomous.

On the other hand, the need of faith, of something which is definitely positive or affirmative (Carlyle-ism, if I may be allowed the phrase) is a sign of weakness. The man of faith, any kind of "believer," is necessarily subservient to something outside himself: he cannot posit himself as an end, and he cannot find ends within

himself. The "believer" does not really belong to himself, he is only a means, he needs to be used, and he needs somebody to use him. His instinct accords the highest place to a morality of abnegation; and everything within him—his prudence, his experience, and his vanity —prompt him to espouse this morality. Any kind of faith is the expression of self-denial, and of estrangement from self . . .

When it is considered that a code of conduct is absolutely essential to the vast majority of people, a code which restrains them and regulates them from without; and when it is considered that external control, or in other words, slavery, is the one and only condition under which weak-willed men, and particularly women, can develop, then at once the meaning of conviction and faith becomes evident. They give a backbone to the man of prejudice. The only conditions under which such a man can survive at all are to avoid looking at most things, never to be impartial, always to belong to some party or another, and to have a clear-cut point of view in forming all his judgments.

And this is precisely the opposite procedure to that followed by the seeker after truth . . . A believer cannot be at liberty to have any conscience for what is true or untrue: any independence in this regard would bring about his collapse. It is merely a pathological development of this defective sight which converts a man of conviction into a fanatic like Savonarola, Luther, Rousseau, Robespierre, Saint-Simon—types which are the exact opposite of strong and freed minds. But the striking poses of these morbid minds, and their epileptic ideas, work upon the masses of mankind: for fanatics are picturesque, and men would much rather be entertained by a pose than listen to reason . . .

LV

Let us now take one step further in our study of the psychology of prejudice, or of "faith." It is some time since I first proposed for consideration the point of view that prejudice is a greater enemy of truth than lying. ("Human, all-too-human," I, Aphorism 483.) This time I wish to state the question more definitely as follows: Is there any distinction whatever between a prejudice and a lie?—Everybody thinks there is, but what doesn't everybody believe? Every prejudice has its own history, its own formative stage, its period of tentativeness and mistakes. It becomes prejudice only after not having been a prejudice for a long time, and then having been nearly a prejudice. What does it matter if in one of these embryonic stages the prejudice was actually a falsehood? Sometimes all that is required is a change in persons: the father's lie becomes an article of faith for the son.

I call it lying to refuse to see a thing in the way it appears; it is another matter whether the lie was committed before witnesses or otherwise; for the most common form of lying is self-deception, and deception of others, compared to this offense, is comparatively rare.

Now this refusal to face things the way they appear is absolutely essential for anybody who joins a party; the party man is invariably

a liar. For example, German historians are convinced that Rome stood for despotism, and that the Teutons introduced the idea of liberty into the world: what is the difference between a conviction like this and a lie? Is it to be wondered at, after this, that all partisans, including German historians, instinctively utter ponderous moral pronunciamentos—or that morality itself has been kept alive by the fact that partisans of every kind constantly stand in need of it?

A remark I have frequently heard used by anti-Semites is the following: "We admit we are prejudiced, and we live and die for our prejudices—everyone's prejudices should be respected!" On the contrary, my dear sirs, an anti-Semite does not become more worthy of respect because he is a liar on principle . . . Priests are much more subtle in these matters because they understand the objections which might be raised against following prejudice (namely against falsehood raised to the status of a principle for some special purpose) and so they have borrowed from the Jews the device of interlarding the ideas of "God," the "will of God," and "God's revelation" at this point. Kant also, with his categorical imperative, was up to the same game—hence his concept of practical reason.

There are some questions to which man cannot give a clear answer; all the important questions, and problems of value are beyond human reason . . . Genuine philosophy consists in understanding just how far reason can go . . . Otherwise why did God reveal himself to men? God does nothing superfluous. Man cannot by himself know anything about good and evil, and so God taught him his will . . . The conclusion of the whole argument is that the priest cannot lie, because questions of truth or otherwise have nothing to do with the matters dealt with by the priests. For in order to lie, it would be necessary to know what the truth should be. But this is more than men can grasp—hence the priest speaks only as an agent of God, who alone understands.

Such is the sacerdotal syllogism, and it is by no means confined to Jewish and Christian priests: the right to lie and the clever trick of "revelation" are characteristic of all priests, whether decadent or pre-Christian. (The pre-Christian priests affirmed life, and "God" for them meant acquiescence in organic life.)

The "law," the "will of God," "Holy Scriptures," and "inspiration," are all merely methods used by priests for attaining power and keeping it. And they are ideas which underlie all theocracies, and all priestly or philosophical forms of government. The "holy lie"—which is common to Confucius, the code of Manu, to Mahomet, and to the Christian church—is even to be found in Plato. Whenever the phrase, "This is truth," is uttered, beware of the priestly lie.

LVI

In the last resort, it boils down to this—what is the purpose of the priestly lie? The fact that from the Christian religion a really "sacred" purpose is absent is my principal objection to the means it employs. Its intentions are evil—to poison, slander, and deny organic life, to despise the body and to degrade and pollute humanity with

the idea of sin—hence it follows that the means it employs are evil.

I have quite a different feeling when I read the book of Manu, an incomparably superior and more intelligent work than the Bible, which it is almost a sin against intellect to mention in the same breath as the Bible. And the reason is obvious: there is genuine thought behind it, not merely an evil-smelling Jewish compilation of rabbinism and superstition—it gives the most pernickety psychologist something to digest. And, even more important, it is entirely different from every kind of Bible because it is intended to help the nobility, the philosophers, and the warriors, to keep a whip-hand over the mob. It is full of dignified values, it is inspired with the idea of attaining perfection by accepting what life has to offer, and it manifests a feeling of exultation in self as a living fact—the sun shines upon the whole book.

Here everything that Christianity besmirches with its bottomless vulgarity—for example, procreation, women, and nuptials—is treated earnestly, reverently, and with affection and certainty.

How could anyone possibly put into the hands of children and ladies a book which contains such filthy words as these: *"To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband . . . it is better to marry than to burn"?*

And is it possible to be a Christian so long as the actual generation of man is Christianized, or in other words defiled, by the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception? . . .

I know of no book in which so many delicate and kindly things are said of women, as in the book of Manu: these old grey-beards and saints have a way of being polite to women which would be almost impossible to surpass. "The mouth of a woman," says Manu, "the breasts of a maiden, the prayer of a child, and the smoke of sacrifice, are always pure."

And elsewhere he says: "There is nothing purer than the light of the sun, the shadow of a cow, air, water, fire, and the breath of a maid." Finally one more quotation: "All the orifices of the body above the navel are pure, all below the navel are impure; but in the maiden the whole body is pure"—but perhaps this is also a "holy lie"!

LVII

It only needs a comparison of the intention of Christianity with that of Manu to show how utterly unholy is Christian procedure: and to do this these two utterly contrasted ethics should be examined side by side under the strongest light of comparative criticism —though any such critique of the Christian religion must in the end bring Christianity into contempt.

A law-book like the book of Manu has the same origin as any other law-book: it epitomizes the experience, the sagacity and the experimental morality of long centuries: it lays things down definitely, even if it creates nothing new. What is required for a codification of this kind is a recognition of the fact that the means used to secure authority for a hard-won truth, are entirely different from those which would be required to prove it. A law-book never need

recite the utility and the preliminary causistry justifying its laws: for if it did so, it would lose its tone of command—the "Thou shalt" which enforces obedience; and this is the heart of the matter.

At a certain point in the development of a people, the most far-seeing class (that is, the class which can best see both backwards and forwards) declares that the experimental period in arriving at how all the people shall or can live has now come to an end. The object now is to reap as rich and complete an harvest as possible in return for the terrible times of experiment gone through. Consequently what has now to be avoided at all costs is further experiment, or a prolongation of the period of testing, selecting and criticizing values.

To prevent this, a twofold barrier is set up: on the one hand, Revelation, which assumes that the reason behind the laws is superhuman in origin; that these laws were not sought and found by a slow process and after many mistakes, but are of divine origin, in their entirety, perfect, without any development, a gift and a miracle . . .; and on the other hand, tradition, which assumes that the law has been in existence unchanged from time immemorial, and that it is impious and a crime against one's ancestors to cast doubt upon it.

Thus the authority of the law is established on the twofold principle: God gave it, and our ancestors lived it. The best intention behind such a procedure is to lead consciousness step by step away from focusing upon the problem of living correctly (which has now been established by intense effort and carefully scrutinized experience), so that morality may find its expression in an entirely automatic functioning of the instincts: such being the only possible method of mastering and attaining perfection in the art of living.

To draw up a code-book like that of Manu is equivalent to endowing a people with the possibility of future self-mastery and perfection—it gives them the right to aspire to the highest achievement in the art of living. To do this it must be made unconscious—such is the purpose of every "holy lie."

There is an ordering of mankind into castes, and this is the only law of domination, sanction given to a natural law and to natural justice of the highest importance, upon which no innovation, nor any "modern idea" has an effect. According to this law, society is divided into three distinct types, differentiated physically, but mutually interrelated; and each has its own rules of health, its own sphere of work, and its own particular concepts of self-mastery and perfection. It is not Manu but nature that sets apart in one class, the individuals who are predominantly intellectual; and in another class, those who excel in muscular aptitude and strength; and in the third, those who are distinguished neither in body nor in mind—the mediocre—by far the greatest number, the first two categories being those of the elect.

The first of these castes (whom I will call the "few") has the privileges of the few who are perfect: it is their character to express happiness, beauty and goodness on earth; for only intelligent

men have any right to beauty and to the beautiful, as they are the only ones who can be good without being feeble. "Beauty is for the few," and goodness is a privilege. Nothing could be more unworthy in this caste than uncouth manners or a pessimistic view of things, an eye for ugliness . . . or indignation against the general state of affairs. For indignation is a privilege set apart for the Chandala, and so is pessimism. What the instinct of the intellectuals inspires is the opinion that the world is as good as it can be; and this is the instinct of affirmation.

It is even conceded that imperfection, inferiority, distance, the loneliness of superiority, and even the Chandala belong, as parts, to the universal perfection. The intelligent men, in common with the strong men, find their happiness where the others see only disaster. Their delight is in the labyrinth, in being hard to themselves and to others; in strenuous effort; and their joy is in self-mastery. With them asceticism becomes second nature, a need, and an instinct. A difficult task they regard as a privilege; and to lift burdens which would crush their fellow-men is merely a recreation . . . Knowledge for them is actually a form of asceticism. They are the most conscientious of men; which doesn't prevent them from being cheerful and gracious. They are the rulers, not because they desire it, but because of what they are: they are not at liberty to occupy a secondary position.

The second of these castes: To this belong guardians of the law, of order and security, the noble warriors, and in particular the king, as the personification of warrior and judge. The second caste constitutes the executive of the intellectuals, the nearest to them and belonging to them, whose duty it is to relieve their superiors of all the rough tasks in the business of ruling. They are the followers, the assistants and the most apt disciples of the ruling caste. And in all this, I repeat, there is nothing artificial or arbitrary; for nature is put to shame by anything other than this state of affairs . . .

The division of mankind into castes and orders of rank is merely a formulation of a profound law of life itself; and the differentiation of the three types is essential for the maintenance of social amenities, and of the breeding of higher and better types of men. The one thing essential for the maintenance of any rights whatever is that there should be no equality of rights: for a right is the same thing as a privilege, and everyone is entitled to the privileges of his own type.

And let us not underestimate the privileges of mediocrity; for as life gets higher, it gets harder. It is colder on the heights and there are greater responsibilities to face. A highly-developed civilization is a pyramid; it can rest only upon a broad base; and at the bottom there must be a well-packed mass of mediocrity. The handicrafts, commerce, agriculture, science, most of the arts, and in short, most of the professional and business callings, are compatible only with mediocre ability and ambition. Such callings would be unfitting

for exceptional men; the instinct which takes kindly to them is equally unfitted for both aristocracy and anarchism.

If a man is of some public use, a wheel, a function, he has a pre-destination for that sort of thing. It is not society that makes them intelligent machines, but the peculiar kind of happiness of which they alone are capable. The mediocre glory in their mediocrity: their specialty, and their natural instinct, is to master one thing alone. Thus it would be absolutely unworthy of a profound thinker to look down upon mediocrity as such. Indeed mediocrity is essential if superior types are to be produced. It is prerequisite to any high degree of civilization: and if the outstanding man handles the mediocre man more delicately than he handles himself or his equals, it is not merely kindness of heart or "humanitarianism" but his duty.

Whom do I hate most amongst the rabble of today? the Socialistic rabble, the apostles to the Chandala, who undermine the workingman's instincts, destroy his happiness, and his feeling of contentment with his trivial existence—who make him envious and who teach him revenge . . . There is nothing wrong with unequal rights; only in the claim to equal rights . . . What is evil? Ah, but I have already replied to this question; everything arising in weakness, envy, and revenge—the anarchist and the Christian belong to the same family . . .

LVIII

As a matter of fact the purpose for which a man lies makes all the difference in the world; whether it is intended to build up or destroy by the lie in question. There is every reason for comparing the Christian and the anarchist because the impulse of both is towards destruction. History easily proves this proposition, and makes the similarity appallingly clear. In the last chapter we studied a code of religious laws of which the purpose was to transform the means of developing and expanding life into a permanent social format—and Christianity deliberately set out to abolish such a code, for the simple reason that life flourishes under it. Under Manu the advantages of reason acquired through long ages of experimental uncertainty were applied with advantage to all purposes, even the most minute, and some effort was made to reap a harvest as large, and complete, and rich as possible. Under Christianity, on the other hand, this very harvest is blighted in a single night. What stood there, firm through the ages, was the *Imperium Romanum,* the most magnificent form of organization in the teeth of difficulties that has ever been achieved; an organization compared with which every thing that went before and after seems mere patchwork, jerry-building, and amateurishness. When the holy anarchists set out to attack the "world," they meant the *Imperium Romanum,* and they succeeded to such an extent that in the end not one stone was left standing—and even Teutons and other such clod-hoppers were able to overrun it . . . The Christian and the anarchist are both decadents, both are only able to act for the purpose of disintegrating, poisoning, degrading, and blood-suck-

ing; they both have the impulse of mortal hatred towards anything that stands up, and is great, and is lasting and shows promise for the future . . . Christianity was the vampire of the *Imperium Romanum*—almost overnight it shattered the vast achievement of the Romans, who had laid the foundation for a wide culture yet to come. Can it be that this fact is not yet understood? The *Imperium Romanum* that we know, and that the history of the Roman colonies teaches us to know better; this most admirable work of art carried out on a large canvas, was merely the beginning of a construction built to prove its worth over thousands of years. To this day nothing on a like scale has been attempted on the wide earth or even dreamed of!

This organization was strong enough to outlast mad emperors, for the accident of personality has no effect in such a case—the first principle of all monumental architecture. It was not strong enough to stand against the deadliest kind of corruption—against Christians . . . the stealthy worms, that under cover of night, mist, and deceit, bored their way into the heart of every individual, sucking him dry of all interest in serious matters, and all interest in reality—this cowardly, effeminate, and sentimental gang gradually alienated all "souls," one at a time, from that colossal edifice. They sapped the strength of all the significant, manly and noble natures, that had felt the cause of Rome to be their own cause, their own earnest purpose, and their own pride. The stealth of fanaticism, the secrecy of the conventicle, ideas black as hell, such as the sacrifice of the innocent, mystical "communion" in blood-drinking, and above all the slowly-kindled flame of Chandala revenge—this was the sort of thing that became master of Rome: the kind of thing Epicurus had earlier combated in an embryonic form. One has only to read Lucretius to realize that what Epicurus contended against was not paganism but something essentially "Christian," namely the corruption of minds with the ideas of guilt, punishment, and personal survival. He contended against the underground cults, in which Christianity was latent; it was a genuine "salvation" when he denied personal survival.

And Epicurus had triumphed. In fact, every decent Roman with pretensions to intellect was an Epicurean—until Paul appeared on the scene . . . Paul, an incarnation of Chandala hatred against the empire (or the "world"): Paul, the Jew, the eternal and perfect Jew —Paul the genius . . . He realized that, by means of the small sectarian Christian movement which had broken away from Judaism, a world conflagration could be kindled. He realized that by means of "God on the Cross," everything underhand, seditious, and a product of rebellious intrigues within the empire, might be welded together into one immense power. "For salvation is of the Jews."

Thus Christianity supersedes and epitomizes every kind of subterranean worship, such as that of Osiris, of the great mother, and of Mithras, for example—it was in realizing his opportunities in this direction that Paul showed his genius. So sure was his instinct, that with reckless disregard for truth, he actually put into the very lips

of his patent "Savior" all the ideas which made the Chandala sectarian cults so fascinating—he made Christ into something that even a priest of Mithras could understand . . .

This it was which was "revealed" to him at Damascus. He grasped the fact that by means of personal survival he would be able to vilify the "world"; he grasped the fact that he would master Rome by means of Hell; and that "the life beyond" kills this life . . . Nihilist and Christ rhyme in German, and also they mean the same thing . . .

LIX

The whole labor of the ancient world gone for naught—I have no word for this, I cannot express my emotion at this atrocity—and, considering that its work was merely preparatory, that with granitic self-consciousness it laid only the foundations of a work which was to have gone on for thousands of years, the whole meaning of antiquity disappears! . . . To what end the Greeks? to what end the Romans?—all the essentials of a cultivated civilization were already there; all the methods of knowledge had been attained; the great and incomparable art of reading well had been established—a prerequisite to the tradition of culture and the unity of knowledge.

The natural sciences, hand in hand with mathematics and mechanics, were on the right road. The sense of fact, which is the last and most valuable of all the senses, was in their blood, and had been for centuries. Can it be that this is fully understood? Everything essential to the beginning of the work had been arrived at—and I must again repeat that the most essential thing, and the the thing most difficult to arrive at, is method; because method has to encounter the longest and strongest opposition from habits of laziness.

Today we have reconquered, after an incredible self-discipline (for all of us are afflicted at some point with relics of the Christian instincts) an impartial attitude towards reality, a cautious hand in experiment, patience and reverence in minute details, and everything which constitutes integrity in the attainment of knowledge. All these things were already on the earth two thousand years ago! In addition, there was also a refined and subtle sense of tact and taste! Science was not a matter of automatic brain-drill; it was not German "culture" with the manners of a boor! But it was intuitive, it showed itself naturally in men's demeanor, almost as an instinct —and this frame of mind was able to understand reality . . .

Yet all this was in vain! Overnight it became merely a memory! —The Greeks! the Romans! nobility of the instincts, taste, methodical research, genius for organization and administration; a faith in and a will to the future of humanity, a terrific affirmation of everything crystallized in the *Imperium Romanum,* manifesting itself in every form of activity, the grand manner not merely expressed in art, but in actuality, in truth, and in living.

And all this was buried in a night, though not by a cataclysm of nature! Not trampled to death by Germans and others of heavy

foot! But brought to shame by crafty, stealthy, invisible, anemic vampires! Not conquered—merely sucked dry! . . .

Hidden vengefulness, petty envy, became master! Everything that is degenerate, based in suffering, soaked in ignoble feelings, was uppermost in a trice! One need only read any of the early Christian agitators (Saint Augustine, for example) in order to realize or rather in order to smell what filthy fellows came to the top. It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that the leaders of the early Christian agitation were without intelligence. Oh, they were shrewd, shrewd to the point of holiness, were these fathers of the church! What they lacked was something else altogether. Nature had neglected them in one respect. Nature forgot to give them even a modest endowment of decent, respectable and cleanly instinct . . . Between ourselves, they are not even men . . . If Mohammedans despise Christians, they have a perfectly good reason for doing so; because the Mohammedan religion assumes that it has to do with men . . .

LX

Christianity destroyed for us the harvest we might have reaped from ancient civilization; and then later it went further and prevented us from harvesting the culture of Islam. The wonderful culture of the Moors in Spain, which was more closely related to our modern problems, and consequently could have made a nearer appeal to our senses and inclinations than that of Rome and Greece, was trampled down (by feet I prefer not to describe)—and why? Because in its origin it arose from a noble and manly impulse, because it affirmed life, even the refined and rare sensuousness of Moorish life! . . . Later on the crusaders conducted a war against a civilization before which they should rather have grovelled in the dust—a civilization compared with which our nineteenth century existence seems feeble and decrepit.

What the Crusaders wanted, of course, was plunder: for the east was rich . . . Prejudices must be set on one side! The Crusades were a superior kind of piracy, nothing more. The German nobility, essentially Viking in origin, was in its element in wars of this kind; and the church knew only too well the best way to get the German nobility on its side . . . The German nobles were always the "Swiss guard" of the church, they were always at the service of the church's instinct for destruction—but they had to be well paid for what they did . . . Just to think that it was with German swords, with German blood and courage, that the church waged mortal conflict against everything noble on earth! This raises a great number of painful questions. The German nobility has had nothing to do with the actual development of a higher civilization: and the reason is obvious . . . Christianity and heavy drinking—the two great stultifiers . . . Essentially the difference between Mohammedanism and Christianity is the difference between an Arab and a Jew. There is no need to pause for choice between them—the decision is obvious. A man either belongs to the Chandala or he doesn't. That great free

spirit, Frederick the Second, a genius among German emperors, did not hesitate: "War to the knife with Rome! Peace and friendship with Islam!"—this was not only what he felt, but also how he acted. What! has a German to be actually a genius, a free spirit, before he can have decent feelings? It always amazes me how a German could possibly have Christian feelings . . .

LXI

At this point we have to revive a memory which must be a hundred times more mortifying to Germans. It was Germans who destroyed in Europe the last great harvest of culture which Europe was to garner—the Renaissance. Is it understood even now, will it ever be understood, what the Renaissance meant? It was an overthrowing of the Christian values, an attempt made with every possible means available, and with every impulse and resource of genius, to set up the opposite scale of values, the scale of noble values . . . Until now this has been the one supreme struggle; there has never been any question more important than that of the Renaissance—and it is my question too.

There has never been a more fundamental, a more direct, and a more severe attack, launched upon the whole front at the foe's stronghold. It was an attack at the strategical point, at the very seat of Christianity, with the intention of enthroning noble values there—that is, of insinuating them into the instincts, and the most fundamental needs and desires of those in authority there . . . I see before me a possibility magical in its charm and colorfulness. It seems to me to scintillate with all the shimmering lucency of a delicate and refined beauty. It generates an art so divine, so devilishly divine, that it may take thousands of years before another such occasion will arise. I see a spectacle so rich in meaning, so wonderfully paradoxical, that it is enough to make all the Gods on Olympus roar with laughter—Caesar Borgia as Pope! . . . Do I make myself plain? . . . That is the kind of triumph for which I alone am longing today; for it would have swept Christianity into oblivion.

But what happened? It was a German monk, Luther, who came to Rome, filled with all the thwarted and vengeful instincts of an unsuccessful priest; and gnashed his teeth over what he saw of the Renaissance in Rome. Instead of comprehending, with a profound thankfulness, the miracle that had occurred—Christianity beaten in its own stronghold—the sight merely moved him to rage. A religious man thinks only in terms of himself—Luther could only see the corruption of the Papacy, at a time when the very opposite was becoming evident; when the old corruption, the original sin, Christianity, sat on the throne of the Popes no more! But life! the triumph of life! was there instead. An acceptance of loftiness, beauty and courage sat on the throne of the Popes. . . . And Luther put the church back where it was . . . Luther attacked the Papacy.

Thus the Renaissance became a meaningless event, all to no purpose—ah, these Germans! What a lot they have cost mankind already! Their achievement has always been something to no purpose—the

reformation, Leibnitz, Kant, and what is called German philosophy, the wars of "liberation," the empire—in every case something to no purpose in replacement of what had already existed, in replacement of what was irrecoverable . . .

These Germans are my foes, I boast of it; I despise all their muddiness of thought and morality, all their cowardice in the face of an honest yes-or-no. For nearly a thousand years they have muddled and confused everything they laid hands on. They have on their conscience all the half-measures and less-than-half-measures, from which Europe is suffering. They also have on their conscience the uncleanest, and the most incurable, and the most irremovable species of Christianity—Protestantism . . . If Christianity is never abolished the Germans will be to blame . . .

LXII

With this I complete my indictment and pronounce my judgment: I condemn Christianity! I bring against the Christian Church the most terrible accusation that has ever been uttered. I say that it is the worst of possible corruptions, that it seeks to effect the ultimate corruption, the most dreadful corruption. The Christian Church has befouled everything with its touch; it has reversed every sound value, turned every truth into a lie, and every impulse of integrity it has stigmatized with baseness. Then let no one dare to speak to me of its "humanitarian" blessings! By its inmost necessity it must stand forever opposed to the effort to abolish suffering; for it battens upon suffering—it requires and it creates suffering to ensure its own continuance . . . The canker of sin, for example; it was the church which first conferred this misery upon mankind: or the "equality of souls before God"—this utter lie, this excuse for the rancors of all base minds, this bombshell concept, bursting out in modern religiousness and subversion of human discipline—this is none other than Christian dynamite . . . The humanitarian blessings of Christianity indeed! My view of the so-called humanitarianism of Christianity is that it contradicts true humanism: it splits the human core with the art of self-pollution, the desire to escape from actuality at all costs, a mistrust of all healthy instincts, a contempt for them, even.

And parasitism is the one method by which the church lives: sucking all the blood, all the love, all the hope out of life with its anemic, holy ideals—the beyond used as a symbol of escape from the here and now; the Cross as a sign of the most subterranean conspiracy ever revealed, a conspiracy against health, beauty, self-integration, courage, intellect, spiritual tenderness—against the very heart of life.

This is the undying denunciation of Christianity which I shall write upon all walls, wherever there are walls. I have letters that will burn even upon the eyeballs of the blind. I call Christianity the one great curse, the one intrinsic depravity, the one black impulse of resentment, for which no subterfuge is too vile, or too furtive, or too underhand, or too mean. I say this thing is the one indelible

blot upon the achievement of man . . . Yet time is reckoned from the ill-omened day when such a calamity occurred! From the first day of the Christian era! Why not rather from its last day? From today? . . . The transvaluation of all values . . .